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King visit to West Bank gives needed support to Arafat

By Rebecca Trounson
LA Times-Washington Post News Service

JERICHO—King Hussein offered a dramatic gesture Tuesday to support of Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, as he made his first public visit to the West Bank in almost 30 years to discuss the troubled Mideast peace process.

The King, the first Arab leader to travel to the autonomous Palestinian area, said his landmark visit was intended to help speed the pace of Israeli-Palestinian negotiations over Israel's overdue withdrawal of its troops from the West Bank city of Hebron. But the King, who has been critical of Israeli delays in the Hebron redeployment, said he was not trying to pressure the government of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

"The problem lies in the slow pace of implementing what has been agreed upon," King Hussein said at a news conference with Arafat.

The King and Arafat addressed each other warmly Tuesday as they stood at neighboring lecterns, praising each other for their efforts for peace.

They also were united in their insistence that Israel should move quickly on the issue of Hebron.

"We have one position," Arafat said, looking toward the King. "We have a complete understanding that there should be the implementation of everything that has been agreed upon."

The King's visit came as negotiations over Hebron reached a critical stage. Israeli and Palestinian negotiators held another round of intensive, small group discussions in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem Tuesday with formal negotiations expected to resume soon, perhaps as early as Wednesday in the Egyptian resort of Taba. But the two sides offered differing accounts of their progress.

Arafat's own assessment was gloomy. "Until this point, there is no move forward in the negotiations," he told reporters at his headquarters in this dusty desert town. "We don't ask the impossible; we want what was signed to be implemented on the ground."

Several Israeli officials and others close to the negotiations

were more optimistic. While some differences remained, these sources said, the two sides were making progress toward reaching a diplomatic formula that would resolve Israel's security concerns while meeting Palestinian demands that the existing Hebron agreement not be renegotiated.

Israel was scheduled to pull its troops out of most areas of the city in March, but delayed the withdrawal after a series of suicide bombings in Israel by Muslim extremists.

Netanyahu, who inherited the Hebron agreement when he was elected prime minister in May, has said he plans to put it in effect but only with more security measures to protect some 450 Jewish settlers living inside the overwhelmingly Arab city. The Palestinians have said the agreement already provides safeguards to protect the settlers.

Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy was perhaps the most upbeat Tuesday. "The agreement, in terms of the understandings, is nearly closed," he told Israeli television. "There is maybe still 10 percent left."

David Bar-Ilan, Netanyahu's spokesman, also said substantial progress had been made in recent days on what he called the "practical, technical level" but said he believed the Palestinians were deliberately stalling on reaching an overall agreement. "On the strategic level, we feel now there are brakes being applied by Arafat," he said. "It seems to be a tactic on his part, which we've seen before, a feeling that we are in a hurry to close an agreement, so he tries to slow things down, probably to try to gain concessions."

Bar-Ilan declined to specify the sticking points. But other sources said one area of great disagreement remains a demand by Israel that it be allowed not only to pursue suspects into Palestinian-controlled areas but to initiate security operations within those zones.

In his news conference, Arafat seemed exasperated with what he termed repeated Israeli demands for increased security arrangements for Hebron's Jewish settlers.

And, in a suggestion quickly dismissed by Israeli and US

officials, Arafat said that, if it would calm Israel's fears, he would be willing to accept an international military force, including US troops, in Hebron.

"They (Israelis) are repeating security, security," Arafat said. "I said, 'OK, if you don't trust the joint patrol units and our soldiers, OK, why not call upon an international presence with the participation of the American army?'" Arafat pointed to the presence of American peacekeepers in the Sinai and elsewhere, saying there was precedence for US participation in such efforts.

David Bar-Ilan, Netanyahu's spokesman, said the suggestion was greeted in the prime minister's office with "astonishment." It, generally, has been disregarded.

In Washington, Defense Secretary William Perry told reporters, as he prepared to meet with Israeli Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai, that there was no "active consideration" being given to the idea of an international force, with US troops, in Hebron.



King Hussein is greeted by President Arafat upon arrival in Jericho on Tuesday. (Photo courtesy of Maldas)

Jericho summit seen as cementing relations with PNA areas

By Hamdan Al Hajj
Special to The Star

JERICHO—His Majesty King Hussein's landmark visit this week to Jericho in the Palestinian self-rule area is seen as a milestone in relations between the two peoples and as an indication of Jordan's support of the Palestinians in their quest for a comprehensive and just peace.

The King became the first Arab leader to visit the liberated Palestinian territories under PNA rule. The warmth with which he was received by ordinary Palestinians reflects a deep-seated appreciation of the King's leadership and his role in the peace process.

Jericho, like most parts of the West Bank, was under Jordanian rule until Israeli occupation in 1967.

During meetings with Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, both in Jericho and in Amman the day before, the King reiterated his support for the right of Palestinians to self-determination and the establishment of an independent state with Jerusalem as its capital.

The warmth and closeness

between the two leaders, was visible and Tuesday's visit to Jericho, arranged hastily, brought attention to the special relationship between Jordan and Palestine.

By flying into Jericho to meet the PNA government, the King appeared to be sending a clear message to Israel's Likud government and its leader Prime Minister Benjamin

The King had warned earlier that Israeli policies and Netanyahu are likely to jeopardize the peace process and bring the entire region to the edge of the abyss.

The visit also ended speculations about the state of Jordanian-Palestinian relations. Palestinian Minister of Education, Yasser Amr, described the visit as "an historical and successful event." Palestinian Minister of Culture, Yasser Abd Rabbe, said "the visit emphasized the strong Jordanian-Palestinian ties."

Mr. Elias Freij, Palestinian Minister of Tourism, said the visit was a living proof of "Jordan's unyielding support of the Palestinian people."

Observers believe Jordanian-Palestinian relations will witness a new phase of cooperation after this week's visit. During the joint press conference that was held during the visit, the King referred to Jericho as the "sacred unity" between Palestinians and Jordanians. It was in Jericho that the war between the East and West Banks of Jordan was declared in 1950.

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Netanyahu. When it comes to Palestinian rights and struggle, Jordan will not be forced to choose. It will side with the Palestinians. Accordingly, the visit can be seen as an attempt to bring pressure to bear on the Israeli government to resume negotiations and adhere to the peace agreements.

In that sense, the visit was a great boost to Mr. Arafat's standing in his difficult dealings with the Israeli government and its intransigence.

Speaker wants it off the air Deputies are not laughing at political comedy show

By Raed Al Abed
Star Staff Writer

THE SCENE goes like this: Prime Minister Abdel Karim Al Kabarti look-alike takes the podium to deliver his now infamous statement about his government's intention to "end wheat and fodder subsidy. Few deputies are sitting, but two in particular are teasing each other. One is apparently an Islamist while the other is a leftist deputy. As the Kabarti look-alike speaks, the two get involved in a war of words. "You will go to hell for your atheism," says the Islamist. "Take care of your beard or the government will shave it for you," retorts the leftist.

The Prime Minister concludes by saying "we have to change our policy of subsidizing bread and animal fodder." The deputies start to rap on their desks and some make sheep sounds of "baa baa" to protest the government's policies.



A case of mistaken identities?

This was a scene from the new political slapstick comedy series *Ahlan Hukuma* (Welcome Government), performed by the famous trio Nabeel Sawalha, Hisham Yannis and Amal

Al Dabbas. The script is written by Nabeel and Hisham based on ideas provided by Dr. Jawad Al Anani, a former minister, and political commentator Mr. Eyyad Qattan. The program is aired on JTV every Thursday.

But most deputies did not find the program, particularly the bread and fodder scene, amusing. In fact many considered it slanderous and called on Speaker Sa'ad Hail Srour to ask the government to apologize and to take the show off the air.

Speaker Srour yielded to their calls and expressed his disturbance over the program which he said "offends Parliament." He wrote to the Prime Minister demanding immediate legal and administrative action against those who were behind "such improper behavior." They included the Prime Minister, Minister of Information and the director of JTV.

"Either they resolve what they have spoiled with Parliament, or we will resort to all the legal and constitutional options available," Al Srour told reporters early this week.

Political satire is not new to Jordan. Its pioneers are the

same three Jordanian actors, who on the stage of the Nabeel and Hisham Theatre, presented plays that poked fun at parliamentary elections and the democratic experiment, the peace process and the peace negotiations and Arab summits among others. Their jokes and impersonations were always tolerated even when Hisham made his famous impersonations of King Hussein and Yasser Arafat or when Nabeel dressed and acted as former prime minister Sharif, now Prince, Zeid Ben Shaker, or President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt.

Their shows, whether on the stage or on the small screen, were always very popular. Hisham and Nabeel previous TV shows dealt with social ills and phenomena, but this time *Ahlan Hukuma* was seen as crossing the red lines.

Naturally Hisham and Nabeel do not believe they are doing anything wrong and as expected defend what they're doing as their right to free expression. "We do not intentionally make any attack against them [deputies] personally. We are only handling issues and subjects connected to people, their rights and their democracy," Hisham told *The Star*. "If there was a misunderstanding of a gesture made by

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Chinese cartoonist first draws fire, now respect

By Rone Tempest
LA Times-Washington Post News Service

BEIJING—Stretched out in his bed at the Peking Union Medical College Hospital, where he is recovering from kidney surgery, Ding Cong hardly looks like one of the most dangerous men in China.

During World War II, Ding worked with the American Office of Strategic Services, precursor to the CIA, and was instrumental in the propaganda campaign against Japan. Later he took the winning Communist side in China's civil war.

Ding, 80, has never wielded anything more lethal than a paintbrush. But his skills as a political cartoonist made him a national hero during time of war and an enemy of the state during time of peace. He did a celebrated color scroll in 1947 that powerfully depicted the corruption of Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist regime and the collusion of its

American allies. Not long after their victory in 1949, the Communists lost their sense of humor about political matters. Despite a whispered warning from his friend Chou En-lai, the late Chinese premier, Ding kept producing cartoons satirizing the political order.

"Chou told me I better stop what I was doing," Ding recalled in an interview this week, after the first exhibition of his work in a Beijing museum. "I wrongly believed that after the liberation I could keep working. I soon learned that the realities had changed. The new reality was socialism. This was a reality beyond criticism."

Describing former Chinese leader Mao Tse-tung, he spoke elliptically, but his point would not be lost on any Chinese who had undergone the famines of Mao's Great Leap Forward from 1957-60 or the terror of his Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution from 1966-76.

"At that time," Ding said, "China worshiped a certain

deity. I had to constantly ask myself if the deity was right or if I was right. At the time, I believed I was wrong, which is why I lived through my ordeals. Later, looking back on things, I realized that I was right after all, and that is when I started getting fat."

Ding was exiled to labor camps, bounded by the Red Guards and banned from painting and drawing. When he was allowed to leave the camps, he was ordered to work at the Museum of Fine Arts in Beijing, scrubbing floors under works by artists whose skills were vastly inferior to his own.

Sometimes, to amuse himself while he arranged exhibitions in the museum, Ding sketched on the back of display cards. Later, when the political restraints on him loosened, he used these sketches to illustrate books.

In 1979, he was among the last of China's intellectuals to be rehabilitated after the Cultural Revolution. Except for a series of drawings of the notorious "Gang of Four"—including Jiang Qing, the wife of the late Chairman Mao—Ding never returned to the political caricature that marked

his work in the war years of the 1940s.

However, his cartoons in the monthly academic journal *Dushu* and many popular newspapers are among the most biting social satires produced in China today.

Political figures such as ailing patriarch Deng Xiaoping and his seeming successor, President and Communist Party leader Jiang Zemin, are still off limits. But Ding's satiric sketches of comically trendy youth, corrupt and greedy officials and obese brats produced under the one-child family planning program offer a rare glimpse at the side effects of economic reform in China today.

In the time-frozen world of political criticism in China, Ding's work stands out for its subtlety and its artistic merit. Most other cartoons are crudely drawn and delve into politics only on the rare occasions when a political figure has been publicly disgraced.

An example of the regime's sensitivity to caricature is the work of Morgan Chao, cartoonist for the magazine *Far Eastern Economic Review* of Hong Kong. On several

occasions in recent years, Chao's cartoons lampooning Chinese leaders were enough to ban the magazine from circulating in China.

In an exhibition that closed this week, Ding was featured in a one-man show at the Museum of Fine Arts that was one of the most successful ever. Among the works displayed were the sketches he made when he worked there as a janitor.

Unfortunately, Ding was unable to attend his own triumphant return to the museum. Doctors at the Peking Union Medical College Hospital—a pre-revolutionary Rockefeller-funded facility that was known during the Cultural Revolution as the "anti-imperialist hospital"—discovered a tumor on his kidney and ordered surgery.

In the interview, Ding said he was hoping to get back to work. One of his projects, he said, is a long scroll depicting the horrors of the Cultural Revolution. Coincidentally, while Ding's art was on exhibit one of his main tormentors, the last living Gang of Four member, Yao Wen-yuan, was released from prison after serving 20 years.

By Ahmed Shaker
Special to The Star

TWO YEARS have passed since the signing of the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty, yet for Jordan the promised dividends of peace are still to come. Flashy expressions like the fruits of peace are still ink on paper while vital issues like water remain unresolved.

Jordanian-Israeli relations have become strained as a result of Israeli stubbornness regarding the implementation of the accords signed with the Palestinians.

The Israeli government's opening of the tunnel under the Aqsa mosque and the clashes that followed added to the tension between the two countries. Locally, the opposition played on the unconvincing Israeli stance including its delay of redeployment of troops from Hebron. It saw it as a further excuse to call for the negotiation of the peace treaty with Israel.

Observers agree that the latest statements by the King in Washington were a clear warning, reminding the Israeli govern-

ment of those days during the Gulf war when its people were forced to wear gas-masks.

Though King Hussein sought to calm down the tense situation upon his return home, it is unknown what later led to the escalation of tensions between the two sides.

Minister of Information Dr. Marwan Al Mueasher told *The Star* that there is still room for hope and Israel may yet take positive steps. However, the minister was weary of "Israeli intentions." He said that after Dore Gold's visit to Amman, the Israeli government resumed its policy in expanding settlements and few hours later it opened the tunnel under the Aqsa Mosque. Dr. Mueasher said Jordan's stance was clear having made a protest to Gold against such actions.

Prime Minister, Abdel Karim Al Kabarti even refused to meet the Israeli ambassador but delivered to him an eight-page official protest. The government also asked its ambassador in Tel Aviv, Mr. Omar Al Rifai, to inform the Israeli government of the risks in the situation.

The Minister said that Jordan hoped that the Washington Summit would reactivate the peace process, but the exact opposite happened.

However, Israel remains adamant. It even hinted at the possibility of reversing the Oslo Accord.

Dr. Mueasher wonders how can one trust such agreements. During his previous visits to Jordan just before being elected as prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, emphasized that the Jordanian-Israeli relationship is "sacred and is respected by all sides."

King Hussein is known for his diplomatic views in solving matters, and he had used all means to persuade Netanyahu to stick to the peace accords. The King's statement, which was published by the American press, emerged after a calm and a conscious view of the situation.

Israel has created a tense escalation in its relations with Jordan by refusing to adhere to the Washington Declaration that gives Jordan a supervisory role over the holy sites.

Netanyahu had many times pointed to Jordan's role, in his attempt to create a wedge between the Jordanians and Palestinians. However, in reality, Netanyahu is dealing with Jerusalem as it were an Israeli city, and not as an occupied area.

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Child abuse in Jordan

Overcoming obstacles through awareness

By Manal Omar
Special to The Star

"NOW BREAK into groups of four", the sound of the moderator echoed. The women quickly divided themselves into groups of four. Each addressed three crucial questions: What are the problems facing children? What are the solutions? What are the responsibilities of the community?

The three-day training seminar hosted by the Jordanian Women's Union (JWU) titled "Needs of Children" was among many activities this week regarding children's rights. The seminar coincided with the Arab Child Day, and the questions reflect crucial concerns to Jordanian society. "Children have basic needs, and when these needs are not met, problems will inevitably arise for them as well as society," the JWU moderator told *The Star*.

With a Ph.D. in Counseling and Psychology, the moderator emphasizes the lasting impact of child abuse on the children, the family, and society. "The worse situation is when people do not realize that abuse is occurring; neglecting a child is abuse, spoiling them is also an abuse."

It is easy to deny the rising problem. However, lack of awareness threatens any progress the country hopes to have in securing the future generation.

There are so many stories about children whipped and burned in schools, in children

to using sadistic ways to beat them for discipline, purposes," writes Dr. Mounem Al-Hadidi, chief of the National Forensic Medicine Center. Al-Hadidi explains that the abuse that sometimes results in death is usually a form of emotional outburst and does not have homicidal tendencies. Such cases represent 20 percent of the murder crimes against children.

According to the study conducted by Dr. Al-Hadidi in 1992 and presented to the last May seminar on Child Abuse co-sponsored by the Jordan River for Development Projects (JRDP), the number of injuries to children under 18 between 1990 to 1992, was 3779. These represent 22 percent of the total number of cases. The number of children abused under the age of seven was 149 cases. Twenty nine cases could be described as "child torture" according to international law.

The 1996 study on the "Size of the Problem of Child Abuse in Jordanian Society" (in Arabic) conducted by Lieut. Col. Bashir Saleh Belbeisy, from the Public Security Directorate, points out that the cases of abuse of children under 18 in 1994 alone reached 2,103,250. About 23 percent of these incidents were against children under the age of three. In 1994, 127 of sexual abuse crimes were registered, 88 percent of these were related to sodomy. In 1995, the figure doubled with 364 sexual abuse crimes reported, 95 percent of these were

acts of sodomy.

It is important to define the different categories of abuse. A child according to international law is anyone under the age of 18. The most publicized form of child abuse is physical. This includes everything from bruises to poisoning. Physical abuse can be inflicted on both girls and boys of all ages and social classes, however, there is a significantly higher rate among poor families, young parents, where there is a step parent, parents who were abused, and in the first child.

Sexual abuse is another form of maltreatment that shocks the community. "No matter what the physical impact of sexual abuse is, it may heal; however, the psychological injury caused may remain with the child even until his old age," writes Dr. Waleed Sarhan in a 1996 UNICEF report on psychology and child abuse.

Another form of abuse that tends to go unnoticed is negligence. This can be physical, medical, educational, and emotional. "People do not think of negligence as abuse, but that's exactly what it is," explains the representative from the JWU. Other abuses that go unnoticed are emotional and psychological, Munchausen syndrome (a rare form in which the parents pretend that the child has an illness in order to hospitalize the child, receive medication, etc.), and abuse from the school and the community. Sarhan describes street children as "one of the most hideous pictures of children's abuse, which should be stopped."

According to Hanna Shaheen, a representative from the Jordan River Development



Project, the main obstacle in addressing child abuse "is a lack of a database. There is few statistics and many incidents are not reported. We need to teach the doctors and hospitals to notice the abuse and record it." Shaheen points out that the available statistics and police reports are only a small representation of the actual cases. "Our statistics and information comes from one dedicated officer putting things together, and does not accurately represent the real situation," Shaheen told *The Star*.

The Jordanian legal system deals with the question of child abuse on a number of levels. According to Judge Ahmed Mer'eb, the legal system addresses children's rights under four categories: the crimes against children, the crimes that concern honor and public morals, murders, and begging. The Jordanian Penal Code addresses these issues in separate and general ways.

"A comprehensive law that protects the rights of children does not exist and is needed," explains Issam Zawawi, the presi-

dent of the Builders' of the Future Forum. "A new draft law has been completed by a committee appointed by HM Queen Noor." Through proposing legislation aimed at protecting children against violence, the Jordanian community is addressing this national concern.

Another crucial element is awareness and prevention. "The main idea is for the community to realize their role, they need to become aware of the problems, the consequences, and children's rights," explains Dr. Aiman Abu Laban, the children's program director of UNICEF.

Dr. Abu Laban, says that through public awareness activities the community will not only know that the problems exist, but will also become aware of who to turn to in such cases and how to reach out to the abused children. Dr. Al-Hadidi emphasizes that a crucial step to prevention is "enhancing the means of the diagnosis of children at risk by special personnel (medical and educational), so they become able to find out and observe the child at the risk of abuse."

October is proving to be a month filled with promising activities for the future of children. As these activities in Jordan take place, the obstacles that need to be overcome should not be overlooked. By addressing such obstacles the community is providing more occasions to celebrate in the Arab Child Days to come. ■

Deputies are not laughing

Continued from page 1

one of the actors in one scene, which some thought that it described the deputies as goats, then we never thought of that."

He called on the deputies to "have a sense of humor." Minister of Information Marwan Muasher defended the program. "It does not aim at insulting any person or party, but to make fun in a harmless way," he was quoted by *Ad Dastour* daily as saying.

But there are those who are sympathetic to the deputies' cause. "I believe deputies and ordinary people have the right to raise objections to such programs," Fakhri Kaware, president of the General Union of Arab Writers and writer of several radio and TV social shows said. "Especially when this program is clearly trying to advocate the government's view by playing with people's sentiments regarding issues like bread prices."

For Kaware, whose daily column in *Ad Dastour*, tackles mainly social issues, *Ahlan Hukoma's* major flaw is that it "makes fun of people's suffering."

When the show first began two weeks ago no protests were heard. Many viewed it as a witty and entertaining show. But the second episode, which focused on the deputies and their gift with the government over the bread issue, was seen as making fun of some members of Parliament.

"We noticed that since the government raised bread and fodder prices, people looked irritable and gloomy," Hisham said. "So we thought we needed a breath of fresh air, a smile, to create a nice atmosphere where we can discuss our problems without being really harsh."

He said in other democracies "they call ministers cockroaches and say very nasty things about them, but we are polite with ministers and deputies."

But as usual the House is divided over the issue. One deputy, who believes he was meant by the leftist MP in the program, was all for the program. "I strongly support the idea of the program, which deals with events in a satirical manner," leftist deputy Bassam Haddadin told *The Star*. "Although the program fails to draw a true picture of the left I call upon all deputies to understand the goal of the program with an open heart." He said he disagreed with the House Speaker in considering the program as an insult to Parliament. "The insult happens when Parliament fails to carry out its duties properly."

Since Nabil and Hisham visited Israel last year, where they placed a wreath on the tomb of the late Israeli prime minister, Yitzhak Rabin, they have been targets of an extensive campaign of criticism launched by the anti-normalization camp. They were expelled from the artists and writers associations and opposition newspapers have been giving them bad reviews ever since.

"Choosing Nabil Sawalha, Hisham Yannis and Aroul Al Dabbas for this show casts doubts on its goals," Kaware said. "They have lost their credibility among Jordanians and Palestinians."

Some critics go to the extent of accusing the team of *Ahlan Hukoma* of collusion with the government to promote its policies.

Such accusations were denied by Mr. Muasher. "We asked Nabil and Hisham to produce a satirical program for the sake of the constructive criticism. We chose them because they are the best and it is untrue that we planned the program to promote certain government policies," he said. Anani, who supplies Nabil and Hisham with subject ideas for the program, defends the program. "It is natural to have mixed reactions on the show. It is a controversial program, and it has achieved its goal."

He is astonished at news that deputies want to file charges against the government. "Deputies have always demanded the government to raise the ceiling of free speech. I was expecting the government to file charges," he said. "Such a social program, despite some technical glitches here or there, is an experiment that should be allowed to continue."

On their part, the show will go on—for the time being. "People are making fun of the government, we are playing the people making fun of the government. If there is anybody who should be crossed with us it is the government," Hisham said. Sources at JTV confirmed that the program will continue at the same time on Thursday night at 8:30 pm. ■

1994 Study conducted by the Public Security Directorate
Cases of child abuse (Courtesy of UNICEF)

Age	Male		Female		Total	
	Cases	Percentage	Cases	Percentage	Cases	Percentage
Under 3	256,972	23.83	244,388	23.87	501,352	23.83
4-6	178,085	16.49	169,859	16.59	347,944	16.54
7-9	171,017	15.84	163,059	15.95	334,076	15.84
10-12	166,084	15.38	158,407	15.47	324,455	15.42
13-15	157,134	14.55	149,263	14.37	307,397	14.56
16-18	150,203	13.91	138,825	13.55	289,026	13.74
Total	1,079,459	100	1,023,791	100	2,103,250	100

Child abuse reported among Jordanian districts in 1995

Districts	# of Cases	Percentage
Amman	4	26.67%
Irbid	2	13.33%
Zarqa	5	33.33%
Al-Kark	2	13.33%
Ajloun	1	6.66%
Madaba	1	6.66%
Total	15	100%

	Sexual abuse		
	1994	1995	Average
Rape	15	16	15.4
Sodomy	112	364	359
Total	137	380	371

Jordan insists on practical measures

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be discussed in the final stage of the negotiations.

Another crucial issue which is overlooked by the Israeli government relates to the right of return for Palestinian refugees and the displaced.

Israel keeps imposing obstacles against any possible Jordanian-Palestinian trade exchange and it delays the implementation of its trade agreement with Jordan. Jordanians who want to visit Israel are faced with stringent measures when obtaining visas.

Moreover, Royal Jordanian seems to be losing its edge to the benefit of El Al with regards to cheaper tickets and in providing better services.

Many other obstacles emerged on the road to peace

between Jordan and Israel. Yet Jordanian diplomacy preferred not to disclose them. Jordan is one of the few countries that supported the idea of giving the newly elected Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, sufficient time to prove his commitments to the peace agreements.

The Jordanian government carried out extensive efforts to maintain the survival of the peace process in the Middle East. However, observers believe that Israel wants Arab relations to stay static. In this respect, it wants Jordan to have a neutralized role in the upcoming negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians.

On the other hand, Jordanian officials reject what they call an unjustifiable Israeli tactic. Jordan expresses a firm stand on

the right of return of the refugees and displaced.

The Israeli Ambassador in Amman, Shimon Shamir, said that the Israeli government have not have not expected such a popular and official protest against the opening of the tunnel in Jerusalem.

Jordan's Ambassador in Tel Aviv, Omar Al Rifai, confirmed that the crisis between Jordan and Israel does exist. He added that no breakthrough is expected unless the Israeli government adopts a more reasonable and practical measures towards the peace process. These are: Implementing the peace agreements with the Palestinians, withdrawing Israeli forces from Hebron and closing the tunnel in Jerusalem. ■

Arab Child Day

An investment in the future

AMMAN (Star)—The young boy walked confidently to the podium and stood in front of the microphone. Avoiding the eyes of nearly 200 people, including HRH Princess Zein Al Hussein, the Jordanian youth from Salt cleared his throat. He began to recite *Surat Al-Ahqaf*.

The seminar titled "Children and Reading" held at the Haya Cultural Center was the first of many programs launched in response to the Arab Child Day. The seminar was under the patronage of Her Majesty Queen Noor and was attended by the Minister Education, Dr. Munthir Al Massri and the Minister of Social Development, Abu Hammad Jamous. Princess Zein attended as the representative of the Royal Family, and distributed 30 certificates of appreciation for those who contributed to children library services.

Each year the Jordanian community celebrates Arab Child Day which is on the 1st October. The celebration is supervised by a preparatory committee from Noor Al Hussein Foundation. The committee includes 35 members representing both the public and private sectors.

The 1996 motto for Arab Child Day is "The National

Campaign to Promote Reading Among Children." The seminar at the Haya Cultural Center is just one of the activities planned by the committee in celebration of Arab Child Day.

The activities were not just to Jordan's capital. "I'm very happy to say that Zarqa will also participate in celebrating Arab Child Day," Issam Zawawi, head of the Noor Al Hussein Preparatory Committee, told *The Star*.

On 19-20 October, a workshop will be held at the Zarqa Chamber of Commerce, under the patronage of the Ministry of Culture, Ahmed Qudah. The seminar will last three days. Dr. Nabil El Sherif will present a paper on children's literature, Issam Zawawi on children and the mass media, and Rehab Qadumi on child abuse.

Jordan participated on a regional level as well. "Jordan made a commitment when they signed the UN Children's Rights' Declaration. We represented that commitment this year among 12 other Arab nations in a seminar held by the League of Arab States in Cairo," Dr. Renand Al Khatib, president of the National Association for Education of Children, explained.

Four Jordanian students among a 70 participated in the



seminar by presenting Tae Kwon Doe, national songs, and creative writing.

The issues raised in honor of Arab Child Day are crucial to Jordan. Nonetheless, October will come and go. However, the quest for awareness of the rights of children must continue. The accomplishments and activities made in the past

year for the children of Jordan have been many. It must not be forgotten, however, that the road to securing the future is still long and filled with many obstacles.

Through investing in awareness, education, and outreach for the children, the Jordanian community is guaranteeing a safer journey down that road. ■

Save water, every drop counts!

The National Music Conservatory/Noor Al Hussein Foundation and The French Cultural Centre in cooperation with DARAT AL FUNUN present

TRIO THIERRY ROBIN (oud, buzuq and guitar)

Musical Fusion of West and East

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JORDAN TODAY
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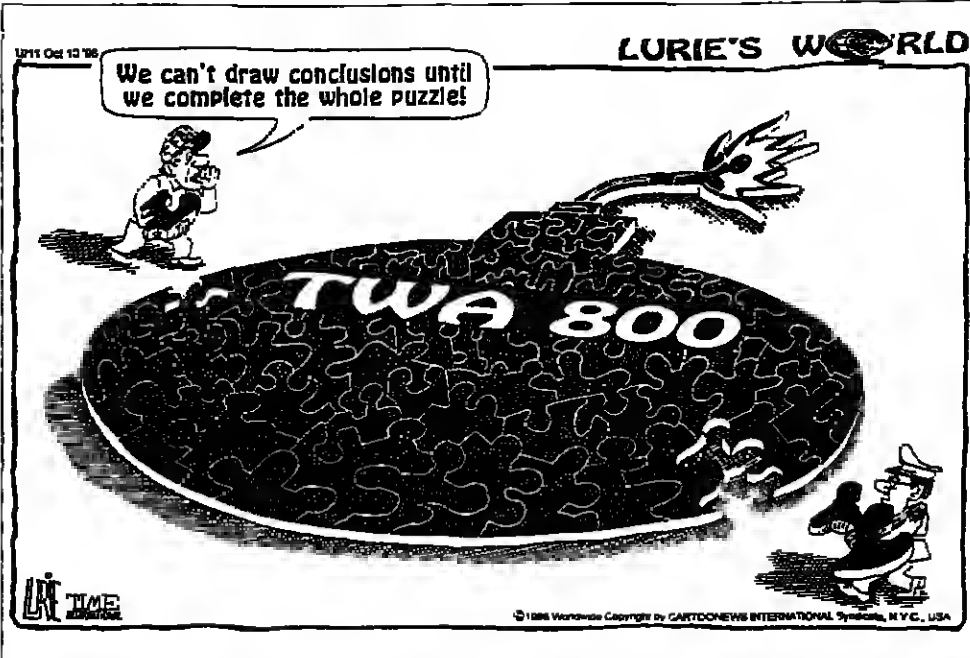
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Our Say...

Proxy war in Kurdistan

THE RECENT flare-up in fighting between the two rival forces in Iraqi Kurdistan could develop into much more than a local civil war. The reversal of fortune for the forces of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, headed by Jalal Talabani, this week could not have come without the aid and support of Iran. Only few weeks ago Talabani's men were chased away from key Kurdish towns by members of the Kurdistan Democratic Party of Massoud Barzani, who were backed by tanks and firepower of the Iraqi army.

Iraq's intervention then tipped the balance of power in favor of Barzani who was immediately summoned to meet US officials where he was convinced to terminate his surprise alliance with Baghdad. The Iraqis had long complained of Iran's interference in the Kurdish areas of northern Iraq and there are no reasons to doubt that this latest round of fighting bears the mark of foreign intervention.

But just as Talabani's men were able to regain almost overnight most of what they lost few weeks ago, it would be safe to conclude that the feuding between Iraq's main Kurdish factions is far from over. Caught in the line of fire are thousands of innocent civilians who appear to be the only victims in this bloody saga.

Barzani, on the other hand, is finding himself in an unenviable position. Having responded to Washington's overtures to dump his alliance with Baghdad he shouldn't waste his time waiting for the US marines to rush to his help. In fact, the US position on Iraq is so confused that it is difficult to predict who is colluding with whom in northern Iraq at the moment.

Talabani cannot expect to count on Iranian help for long. Baghdad will try to undermine Iran's plans in the north, but will be wary of another US reprisal just when the oil-for-food talks are getting somewhere. Turkey, on the other hand, will revive its own plans for the north of Iraq now that the Baghdad government has again lost its influence there. The US no doubt will try to make some gains out of a very fluid situation.

What the whole thing is turning to is a proxy war where regional powers fight each other using one or more of the local Kurdish militias. Previous attempts to bring these factions to the negotiation table had failed and there is a good reason for that.

The problem of the Iraqi Kurds is indivisible from the Iraqi crisis as a whole. It would be futile to try to impose a solution without involving the central government in Baghdad. That's one good reason why political dialogue with the Iraqi government should be reinstated. It's been tried in Bosnia, Palestine, South Africa, North Korea and Northern Ireland among others. The results are mixed, but dialogue is the only alternative to fighting.

Iraq's Kurds have suffered at the hands of everybody, from the government in Baghdad to the Iranians, Turks and even the United States, which is accused of deserting them. To even begin to solve this complicated problem, all parties involved must be invited to talk. Rehabilitating Iraq is a step forward.

Letters to the Editor

Women should be protected

To The Editor,

I have been reading your paper since it has been posted on the internet.

I would like to thank you for your accuracy and fairness in reporting the news. Manal Omar's report on "Violence Against Women, myth or reality," (The Star, 10 October, 1996) have attracted my attention.

It is about time to address the woman and child abuse in our community. It is about time to make the public aware that a woman is not a second class human being and has no feelings.

The public should respond with anger whenever they hear about women abuse. There should be some kind of associations to protect the rights of women.

I know Islamic teachings are great, but

unfortunately the people do not apply them in their lives. I passed through very bad experience in Jordan when I witnessed the abuse and the humiliation of a very close woman to me, but at the time I was not able to help.

I cannot hide my frustration from the bad condition that women live in. I urge the educated women in Jordan to work hard on the issue of women abuse and try to help the oppressed women in my country.

Thank you Manal again for your report and I hope you write about this vital issue again.

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A view from America

Clinton, novice turned veteran

By Carrie Nelle Moye
Star US correspondent

BY ALL written credentials George Bush should have been re-elected president in 1992. He was a statesman with vast experience including having been Reagan's Vice President and having served as the Director of the CIA. He had fought for his country during World War II, had been a senior politician for many years, had big money behind him, and for many months following the Gulf War "victory" had been looked upon as a most admirable hero, with the greatest of accolades.

Yet the American citizens wanted new blood: they longed for a change. Thus they elected a virtual political novice, Bill Clinton. Yes, he had been governor of Arkansas, but he was untested nationally and most certainly a beginner in international diplomacy and leadership. The first two years of Clinton's presidency were spent almost as an apprenticeship. But he matured decidedly and molded into his job. He has developed into an international statesman despite occasional setbacks.

Now for the sake of the United States it is only prudent that Clinton be reelected so that he can apply the experience, maturity, wisdom, connections, and insight accumulated over the past four years. He must be given the chance to pass and implement the various programs he has espoused. Nationally, it is essential that he accomplish his plans for the upgrading of the public schools. No matter how well he handles medical issues, care for the elderly, street crime and the multitude of problems with which we deal daily, education is the final answer. One of the most meaningful slogans around these days is, "If you think education is expensive, try ignorance."

Internationally, Clinton must declare his inde-

pendence from traditional US biased dealings with nations and ethnic groups and demand the same standards we (by law) demand of our own citizenry. If elected for a second term, he no longer has to worry about his place in history from the number of terms served standpoint. Rather, he will be measured by the leadership he does or does not exercise, and the fairness with which he uses his vast powers for humankind, not just Americans.

(For those who continue to denigrate the United Nations, as did Dole repeatedly in the 6 October debate, one must recognize, appreciate and admit that the United States has long since passed the point where we can practice isolationism. We either participate and guide the world or we stand alone arrogantly, and be ignored, ridiculed, and even despised for not providing the leadership in the world community, through the world community versus being the neighborhood bully shouting commands.)

If in 1992 Americans elected in Clinton the choice/voice of the future, it would be difficult to imagine that four years later they would choose a representative of the past. Dole's policies, governmental philosophy, and ideology combine as a resurgence of the 1950s and '60s: isolationism, Cold War rhetoric, and reactionary measures. Is this what Americans want as a leader to guide them into the 21st century?

For some, graves are holier than human life. For some, nostalgia for the past blurs the vision of the future. The United States cannot afford but to look ahead if it wants to continue to lead the world toward global peace, human brother/sisterhood, prosperity, regard for human rights and equality among nations.

If Dole were elected, we would be back to Square One. We would be re-living, not living. We would retain our leadership by force only, devoid of respect for other peoples, other nations. Yes, we could remain the Number One world leader, but at what cost, both physically and psychologically. Gradually the era of "The Ugly American" is being replaced by that of "The Respected American." But this will be lost if we choose to look backward rather than forward.

Build on the myriad experiences of the past? Yes. But we must live in the present with an eye to the future—our country should reflect the same ideology as do we as individuals. Bob Dole is an honored American who has given much to this nation. But his hindsight, not his foresight, is his guide. We must be a part of the future with Clinton, not remain in the past with Dole.

LURIE'S WORLD



The vulture's return

The Islamic reality in Jerusalem

By Ibrahim Hooper

The following editorial was written in response to a September 29 Washington Post article by Morton A. Klein, national president of the Zionist Organization of America.

Morton Klein's editorial attack on Muslim rights in Jerusalem ("The PLO's War Against Jewish History," Washington Post, 29 September) read like a Sarajevo tourist brochure written by Radko Mladic. In his article, Mr Klein attempted to disprove an Islamic connection to Jerusalem and to brush aside the Muslim claim that the opening of the Al Aqsa tunnel was designed to create Jewish facts on the ground in a city holy to three faiths. He failed miserably on both counts.

Mr Klein said, "The Tunnel does not run under, or even adjacent to, any mosque or other Muslim site in Jerusalem." Facts: According to a news release from the human rights group Al Haq, "Most of the buildings lying above the Western Wall tunnel belong to the Islamic Waqf (trust). These properties include a number of Mamluk buildings of great historical, architectural and religious importance, including the Madrasa (religious school) Al Manjakiyya, the Madrasa Al Uthmaniyya, the Ribat Kurd, and the Madrasa Al Jawharyyya."

Al Haq also said the tunnel entrance opens beneath the steps of the Al Umayyiyah School. These facts do not even take into account the basic truth that Muslims regard the entire Haram Al Sharif ("noble sanctuary"), containing as it does the Dome of the Rock and Al Aqsa Mosque, as sacred. The whole area is threatened by this and other as yet unopened tunnels and chambers. Why else would Jewish extremists who wish to destroy the Muslim holy sites be celebrating so openly?

He said Palestinian spread "lies that the Jerusalem tunnel somehow threatens Muslim sites in the city." Now what could possibly lead Muslims

to that conclusion? Could it be the Israeli Airlines advertisement showing the Dome of the Rock and Al Aqsa Mosque replaced with a new Jewish Temple? Could it be reports as early as 1989 that Talmudic schools located near the Western Wall were teaching students the details of Temple service and animal sacrifice? (Time Magazine, 16 October, 1989). Could it be the damage done to Muslim buildings by previous diggings, the 1969 arson attack on Al Aqsa Mosque, the foiled attempt to blow up the Dome of the Rock, or the shooting deaths of 17 Palestinians who challenged Jewish extremists when they sought to lay a Temple "cornerstone" at the holy sites?

These were not isolated incidents or occurrences. Each one is the result of an ideology, which Mr Klein seems to share, that seeks to erase all traces of faiths other than Judaism from Jerusalem. In the last few months alone, occupation authorities have demolished Palestinian buildings, ordered the expansion of Jewish-only settlements on occupied lands and prevented the free transit of workers and essential supplies. Muslim and Christian Palestinians are routinely barred by Israel from religious sites in Jerusalem. The Christian population of Jerusalem drops daily.

Mr Klein wrote: "This (the tunnel's) archaeological evidence shatters the Arab propaganda claim that historically, Jerusalem has been an Arab city." His dismissal of Islamic rights is accompanied by a number of other statements supporting the Muslim claim that the allegedly innocently opened tunnel is really a tool to be used in creating a city in which only one faith is accommodated. Mr Klein refers to the tunnel providing "vivid testimony to the 3,000-plus years of Jewish history in Jerusalem." He says people will see "the physical evidence of thousands of years of the Jewish connection to Jerusalem...testifying to the long Jewish presence...evidence of

Jerusalem's deep Jewish roots." Such claims ignore not only the Muslim presence, but that of the Amorites, Hyksos, Canaanites, Egyptians, Philistines, Romans, Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians, Byzantines, Crusaders, and all other peoples who lived before and after the arrival of Hebrew tribes, in that same land throughout the millennia.

Only someone dedicated to an exclusivist vision of history could so easily refer to the "centuries of Muslim occupation of the city." Would Mr Klein have us believe the millions of Muslim and Christian inhabitants over the centuries were merely squatters waiting until the rightful Jewish owners returned? Does Mr Klein believe Christianity has a merely temporary presence in Jerusalem?

Another allegation states that the recent carnage resulted from incitement of Palestinian "mobs." But according to the Reuters (9/30): "Israeli soldiers in the Gaza Strip were quoted as saying indiscriminate shooting by Jewish settlers and Israeli soldiers ignited the bloodiest day of clashes in the strip." The article went on to describe settlers stopping Palestinian cars at roadblocks and beating the occupants.

Mr Klein's most ludicrous allegation is also the most easily refuted. He wrote, "Jerusalem is not mentioned even once in the Quran." First of all, the Muslim attachment to Jerusalem does not begin with the Prophet Muhammad, it begins with the Prophets Abraham, David, Solomon and Jesus, who are also Prophets in Islam.

Second, Jerusalem is mentioned in the Quran, Islam's revealed text, and in Islamic traditions. One of these hadith (deeds and utterances of the Prophet Muhammad recorded by his companions) states that prayers in Al-Aqsa Mosque are multiplied 500 times. Another companion reported: "Once I asked Prophet Muhammad what was the first mosque established on earth; he said Al Masjid Al Haram

(in Mecca). Then I asked him: Then which mosque? He replied: Al Masjid Al Aqsa..."

Perhaps Mr Klein looked up "Jerusalem" in an Arabic dictionary and failed to find a listing. That is because, as Mr Klein must know, Arabic speakers call Jerusalem "Al Quds" ("The Holy") and the Quran refers to Jerusalem by its Islamic centerpiece, Al Aqsa Mosque. Chapter 17, verse 1, of the Quran states: "Glorified be He (God) who took his servant (Muhammad) for a journey by night from al-Masjid Al Haram (in Mecca) to al-Masjid Al Aqsa (in Jerusalem), whose precincts we have blessed." The night journey referred to in this verse is that of the Prophet Muhammad from Mecca to Jerusalem, and from the rock now located in the Dome of the Rock, to heaven. This event, known as "Al Isra wa Al Miraj," is marked each year by millions of Muslims worldwide.

Mr Klein also did not tell his readers that Jerusalem was Islam's first "Qibla," or direction to which Muslims turned in prayer, or that the very walls of the Old City, of which the Israeli tourist board is so proud, were built by Muslims. He also fails to mention the fact that throughout centuries of Islamic rule, the holy sites of Judaism and Christianity were never permanently altered.

In fact, Muslims are proud of the story of the Caliph Umar who received the keys to Jerusalem from the patriarch Sophronius in the 7th century. When the Caliph was asked to pray in a Jerusalem church, he refused saying he did not want to provide a pretext for Muslims to appropriate a Christian holy site. If only today's rulers, and Islamophobic pundits, were so wise.

Ibrahim Hooper is national communications director for the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), a Washington-based Islamic advocacy group.

Middle East Beat by Khairi Janbek

Piecing the peace

ONE FEELS that people must be reminded that Jordan signed the peace treaty with the state of Israel rather than with its executive branch of that state.

When Jordan stood for giving the benefit of the doubt to the elected Israeli government led by Mr Netanyahu, it was not giving preference to a particular political party in Israel, nor to specific political personality.

The elections of the Knesset, and the direct election of the Israeli prime minister, are an Israeli affair. Honouring international agreements is not the responsibility of the executive branch empowered to honour such agreements.

There are always main constants in the interpretation of agreements, especially those that are signed between the PNA and Israel. And there are also variables that can be altered according to the mutual benefit, and according to the consent of both parties. But it is most important to distinguish between the two, and not to advance one at the expense of the other. The Israeli withdrawal from Hebron, the final status negotiations, the future of Jerusalem, and the question of the Holy Sites, are unalterable clauses in an agreement that stands between peace and war.

If the Israeli government expects to play on the assumed differences in the Arab position, then they would be under a bigger illusion than the signs would show. There is not one Arab position different to the other when it comes to the peace signed between the PNA and Israel. Indeed, the implementation of the agreements is the desire of the international community.

Mr Netanyahu has to realize that pushing things to the brink will only cause them to overspill into a situation that will cause death and destruction in the whole area.

The way Mr Netanyahu wishes to deal with his coalition partners is his own business, but at the same time, he cannot be all things to all people, especially when attempting to reconcile the irreconcilable.

The meaning of peace that the Israeli prime minister wishes to emphasize is still lacking in clarity to almost all the Israelis, let alone the Arab world. The Palestinians are being asked not to lose hope, yet, all what they see are more obstacles in the way of peace.

The Jordanians have been promised that the implementation of the peace agreements are on track, while on the ground, nothing was changing. One wonders, how would Mr Netanyahu have reacted if his counterparts in the Arab world presented him with governments composed of all the anti-peace groups, and informed him that they will be the parties negotiating for the achievement of a comprehensive peace agreement in the region?

The answer in this case is really academic, but, this is really the image reflected on the streets of Arab capitals regarding the Israeli government, and this image is not likely to be altered easily until there is progress on the core issues that effect the emotions of the Arab people.

The question of security is certainly a legitimate concern for any prime minister that governs Israel. But definitely not in the reductionist manner that Mr Netanyahu keeps stressing. Security is not tied down to numbers of military personnel, buffer zones, and types of weaponry, but rather to the whole issue of socio-economic development and inter-faith coexistence. If the Israeli government keeps ignoring the realities of the meaning of peace, then the man in the streets, in Tel Aviv and in Arab capitals will have nothing to look forward to.

17 OCTOBER 1996
Middle East Beat
by Khairi Jamil
Piecing the peace

Business scene

■ The Jordanian Export Development and Commercial Centers Corp. will organize the first fair of Jordanian products in Ramallah, between 6-11 November. The fair will be opened by Mr. Ali Abu Al Raghib, minister of industry and commerce, representatives of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry and other Jordanian industrialists.

■ The shares of some companies in this country are to be quoted on international stock markets such as those of Paris, London and New York. However, this is still in the initial stage and companies are still in the process of consultation.

■ International Company for Medical Investments (ICMI) signed contracts worth \$250,000 related to purchasing medical equipment and supplies for local hospitals. It will sign contracts up to \$500,000 for the same purpose soon. The company was established this year to promote the medical equipments of Swedish, American, German and British companies in Jordan. The company is promoting the "Gemina Knife" which is the latest technological development in the field of brain surgery. The ICMI's budget until last June was JD 5.2 million and its fixed assets are estimated at JD 3.4 million.

■ A loan agreement is to be concluded between Japan and Jordan. Japan is to provide the Antiquities Dept., a donation of \$500,000. This will finance the purchase of equipment to provide maintenance and restoration of archaeological sites in Jordan.

■ Up till last June a total of 37,000 "hot cheques" at a value of JD 44.5 million were issued. This is a rise of 20% over the same period last year. Sources at the Central Bank say that "hot cheques" increased by 14 percent since the beginning of the year.

Foreign Exchange

Wednesday, 16 October

	Buy JD	Sell JD
US\$	0.7080	0.7100
£	1.1056	1.1111
DM	0.4628	0.4651
Sfr	0.5649	0.5677
FRF	0.1370	0.1377
YEN (100)	0.6370	0.6402
DEU	0.4126	0.4147
LYD	0.0466	0.0468

PM stresses importance of industry to the economy

AMMAN (Start)—The industrial sector and industrial exports are now top of the government's agenda. The Prime Minister, Mr. Abdul Karim Al Kabarti, is anxious to stress these two points.

Speaking at the Chamber of Industry, he said that there should be a dialogue based on openness between the industrial and business sectors and the government. Talking to businessmen from the Federation of Chambers of Commerce, and the Businessmen Organization, he said the real solution to face the challenges of the critical economic situation lies within the responsibility of the private sector.

The government cannot provide a solution for poverty and unemployment. The role of the private sector emerges in this case, he added.

The Prime Minister called on the Chamber of Industry to hold a seminar to discuss the implementation of the sales tax law on industrial raw materials.

Mr. Kabarti called on the chamber to submit ideas related to the exemption of raw materials from the sales tax.

The government would be obliged to implement the recommendations of this seminar Mr. Kabarti stressed.

He also called on industrialists to forward ideas on exports to the government. The cabinet would then take those into account. But the idea should aim to cut bureaucratic red tape.

Investments should be

encouraged especially in the fields that do not mostly depend on energy, electricity and water, because such resources are limited. The government's main goal is to create a sound investment climate.

Mr. Kabarti encouraged Jordanian industrialists to adhere to the ISO 9000 which is the par international standard for quality products.

Speaking on privatization, Mr. Kabarti assured that the government would allow any individuals to monopolize such projects.

The government aims to expand the national participation in enterprises that are being privatized, Mr. Kabarti said. He pointed out that the funds provided by privatization will have a great effect on investment.

These funds will also improve the status of the employees and part of them will be allocated to the treasury.

Jordan is keen to strengthen its economic ties with Iraq and promote its products in the Iraqi market. The Jordan-Iraq protocol for 1997 will be signed soon.

The government, Mr. Kabarti stressed, shows no objection to any industrialist who



Al Kabarti

gets the United Nations approval to either export or import products from or to Iraq.

Mr. Khalid Abu Hassan, the head of the Chamber of Commerce, reiterated the industrial point of view to Mr. Kabarti. He said there must be the "activation" of the industrial sector, the promotion of exports and greater competitiveness.

He said the government is to be appreciated because of its encouraging measures. These have helped to create new job opportunities, increase exports and reduce the balance of payment deficit.

"About 22 percent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) comes from industry and more than 150,000 work-

ers are employed in 21,000 corporations," Abu Hassan maintained.

The industrial sector accounts for 90 percent of Jordanian exports to more than 100 countries.

As a result of international economic developments and changes, Jordan is going through a new era, an environment which is characterized by high competition. All countries who are planning for economic development and following structural programs, are in a race to establish free trade zones and cut customs tariffs.

"Jordanian industry is ready to cope with this new reality by enhancing the standard of its performance, quality and productivity," Mr. Abu Hassan said.

Industrial companies are doing their best to cut expenditure in order to compete on the local and external markets.

The current and future stages require utmost cooperation between the government and all institutions of the public and private sectors to improve their quality and performance.

Abu Hassan pointed that the government must have a role in removing all obstacles facing the economy. These include the adjustment of legislations that are related to companies law, customs, the Amman Financial Market and measures on Islamic Banks.

The exemption of the sales tax on all raw materials for industrial use must also be reviewed.

There should be complete co-ordination between the public and private sector in the field of negotiations related either to Arab bilateral agreements, the European Association Agreement and the agreement of the World Trade Organization, Abu Hassan maintained.

Dr. Talib Al Rifai, the director of the Investment Encouragement Corp. (IEC) said that over the last two years, Jordan was able to reach the standard of worldwide competitiveness. We were able to create an attractive investment climate through dominating our national economic performance, he said.

The private sector was able to play a role in the development process.

He said "In Jordan, we are ready to meet the needs of the foreign investor and provide him with our best service, in a way that does not contradict with our welfare and safety."

The IEC has already prepared a list of 13 projects to be discussed at the Cairo Summit next November. Talking about the progress of the Jordanian projects submitted to Amman Economic Summit in 1995, Dr. Al Rifai said that it is premature and unjust to assess these projects after only one year. They are big projects and need quite a while before they can be judged.

Some projects have already made advanced steps and others are still being studied by global consulting companies, Dr. Al Rifai added.

EU, Jordan sign agreement for ECU 100 million structural adjustment support

AMMAN—The European Union (EU) and Jordan signed the official agreement for the provision of ECU 100 million in support of the Kingdom's ongoing structural adjustment program. The support aims at alleviating the external and fiscal pressures on the Jordanian economy and reducing the social cost of reforms.

Moreover, it underscores the EU's commitment to Jordan's key role in the peace process and to the success of the ambitious objectives of its new economic reform program for 1996-1998. The grant will in particular assist in the implementation of these reforms, which the agreement states are critical to ensure the smooth operation of a free-trade area between Jordan and the EU.

Steps towards trade liberalization, privatization and design of a modern tax system are part of the new reforms necessary to ensure that Jordan benefits from unprejudicial opportunities offered by the peace process and accession to the WTO.

The official agreement summarizes the specific objectives of the EU support as i) provision of budgetary support, ii) enhancement of structural reforms, and iii) easing of social reforms and improvement of the social safety net.

The EU foresees that, by alleviating the balance of payments constraints, the present grant will also assist Jordan in achieving higher growth rates, which according to the EU is the most efficient means to reduce unemployment and poverty.

The funds will be released in two tranches, with the first ECU 50 million to be disbursed during the coming weeks.

The second tranche of ECU 40 million will be disbursed after a review mission has assessed progress made in the new reform program. The mission is expected around mid-November.

The entire package comes from the European Commission's MEDA Program, an aid instrument adopted in July 1996 and based on the principles of the Barcelona Declaration of November 1995 to launch a Euro-Mediterranean partnership and reinforce EU financial and technical support for its Mediterranean partners. The agreement was signed on behalf of the Jordanian Government by Minister of Planning Dr. Rima Khalaf and by Head of the European Commission Delegation in Amman Mr. Yves Gazzo. It follows the 11 September 1996 signature in Amman of an Aide Memoire on Structural Adjustment Support.

The International Day for the Eradication of Poverty

ON THE occasion of the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) held a press conference to launch a series of studies on poverty in the ESCWA region at ESCWA headquarters.

The press conference was chaired by the ESCWA Executive Secretary Dr. Hazem El-Bablawi, who presented the main results and recommendations of the new ESCWA study *Poverty in Western Asia: A Social Perspective*. Dr. El-Bablawi was joined by the Chief of ESCWA's Human Development Section Dr. George Kossafi.

Observed globally on 17 October, the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty aims to promote public awareness of the need to eradicate poverty and destitution in all countries particularly in developing countries.

The UN General Assembly has made poverty eradication one of its priority objectives for the 1990s. UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali states that "extreme poverty offends the most basic values of the Charter of the United Nations. It is inadmissible that at this point in time, 1.3 billion people are living in absolute poverty."

The decision to designate the International Day was taken by the General Assembly in its resolution 47/196 of 22 December 1992. Since 1993, the Day has been observed through a variety of activities in many countries.

This year's commemoration

offers the world community an opportunity to raise awareness of the conditions and causes of poverty. It is also an occasion to reaffirm the global commitment to eradicate poverty made by heads of states at the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen that was held in March 1995.

ESCWA has addressed the issue of poverty eradication through its multi-disciplinary activities, with contributions from all sections in its Social Development and Policy Division and its Economic Development and Policy Division.

Work undertaken or in progress on "Poverty Eradication" by ESCWA include:

■ "Poverty in the Arab World", (Al Fajr il Alam Al Arabi), a study submitted as a background document to the Expert Group Preparatory Meeting on "Preparations for the World Summit for Social Development", Published 1994 (English).

■ A Conceptual and Methodological Framework for Poverty Alleviation in the ESCWA Region, a report outlining the basis of the concept of poverty and its measurement and determination. Published 1993 (English).

■ "Women and Poverty in the ESCWA Region", a background paper prepared and submitted to the ESCWA Regional Preparatory Meeting for the International Women's Conference in Beijing, published 1994 (English).

■ "Poverty in Lebanon" (Al Fajr il Lubnan). A poverty profile of the extent and dimen-

sion of poverty in Lebanon, Published June 1995 (Arabic).

■ "A Study on Poverty in Iraq, Before and After the Gulf War", (Dirasah "an Al-Fajr il Iraq, Qabl was Ba'd Horb ol-Khaleef). A poverty profile of the extent and dimensions of poverty in Iraq comparing conditions prevailing before and after the Gulf War. Under printing (Arabic).

■ "Measurement of Poverty in the ESCWA Region" (Qiyas Al-Fajr il Duwal Gharbiy Asia). Poverty indicators (income expenditure and nutritional requirements spending) were identified, data collected and analyzed, and a region-specific model for poverty measurement was formulated. Accurate estimates for poverty lines and extent for the different ESCWA region countries are the expected outcome, published January 1996 (Arabic).

■ Problems of Social Integration in Post-War Lebanon Under Adjustment Policies. This is an overview of prevailing social conditions and changes in post-war Lebanon with particular reference to the government's adoption of structural adjustment measures. Under printing (Arabic).

■ The Situation of Disabled Women, their Marginalization and Measures for Social Integration in the ESCWA Region, published 1995. The paper argues as its main premise that poverty is the primary cause of disability in the region with its implications for and causal effect on factors such as nutrition, education, access to services and treatment, and

The mood of uncertainty prevails in AFM

FOR THE third consecutive week, share prices in the Amman Financial Market maintained a downward trend.

In less than a month, the share index fell by more than five points. After hitting the 150-points psychological barrier to register 152 points last month (the highest since April), the official indicator tumbled again to 147 points.

Such a noticeable drop is attributed by AFM brokers to the mood of uncertainty and pessimism that prevailed after the recent flare-up on the Palestinian territories because of Israeli aggressive measures to open the tunnel under Al Aqsa mosque.

The unannounced failure of the last Washington summit together with the lack of development in the peace agreement between Jordanians, Palestinians and the Israelis, contributed to the feelings of uncertainty on the IFM, dealers believe.

However, other financial analysts are not so clear and argue that the reason for the fall is internal and does not have an external angle. They say that there is renewed enthusiasm for the governments measures to activate the climate for investments and to attract foreign investors under the new securities law that is to be applied soon.

This would mean that the AFM would be run completely by the private sector and the government's role would only be supervisory.

According to this line of thinking, the market could be expected to fall further in the immediate short-term. But there would be no reason to panic, as these dealers are looking at a long-term upward trend. What is happening now is paving the ground for a more fruitful financial environment that needs time to take root. In this instance, a fall in the market would not be representative of the real economic and financial climate in the country.

This kind of thinking is all very well. The problem is that this scenario, taken by itself, creates panic on the market and can be a source of instability. It is not healthy because capital tends to be "shy" and unwilling to take risks.

Furthermore, this situation is accentuated by the high interest rates and the "mopping up" operations carried out by the Central Bank. All these do affect, and what is required is a prudent policy that takes into account fiscal instruments and "fine tuning" of the economy. "Mopping up" is rather a harsh way for dealing with a delicate situation.

BADEA meeting stresses development financing in region

THE BOARD of directors of the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA), an Arab financing institution, created in accordance with resolution issued by the sixth Arab summit conference held in Algiers in 1973, with the objective of promoting economic development in Africa, holds its 84th meeting in Amman, between 16-18 October.

The meeting is held under the chairmanship of Mr. Ahmed Abdallah Al Akeil, chairman of the board of directors, and in the presence of Mr. Ahmed Hattar El Wardi, the director general.

BADEA's current capital is \$1145.8 million. It's board of directors include Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Algeria, Iraq, Oman, Qatar, Kuwait, Libyan, Egypt and

Morocco.

During this session, the bank is reviewing various issues, amongst which is a new volume of financing for the benefit of some African countries.

The holding of this session, takes place, now that BADEA is starting the second year of its third five-year plan (1995-1999) which was approved by the board of governors in its meeting of 13 April, 1994 in Cairo, total included interventions in financing social projects, participation in the capital of African development institutions and support of the private sector. BADEA was able to realize during the first year of the plan (1995) one of its objectives of financing development projects and technical assistance operations. Implementation rate is 100

percent of total commitments allocated for project financing which is \$ 75 million and for technical assistance implementation rate was 98.6 percent of total technical assistance allocation which is \$5 million commitments approved within the lending program for 1995, were allocated to finance 14 development projects and 23 technical assistance operations.

During 1995, the first year of the third five-year plan, BADEA concentrated all its operations in the agricultural sector with loans allocated amounting to \$ 30.35 million i.e. 40.5 percent of total commitments and 67 percent of total technical assistance commitments for the year. The share of the social sector was \$ 6.65 million i.e. nine percent of total commitments, a line of credits for

support of the private sector, \$2 million were allocated to the capital of the African Export-Import Bank with \$10 million. The bank has been created with the objective of supporting commercial exchange between African countries.

The third five-year plan for BADEA's resources and its utilization started this year. BADEA's financing for 1996 included a number of axis which aim at the expansion and diversification of BADEA's activities in beneficiary countries while stressing the agricultural sector. Such evolution in BADEA's policies aim at keeping abreast with the developments witnessed in development financing during the past years. Total commitments for 1996 amounted to \$90 million, with an increase of 12.5 percent on last year's commitments, out of which \$5 million has been allocated for technical assistance.

THE question of the peace process is a very sensitive issue. It is a process that involves many parties and interests. It is a process that is being followed closely by the international community. It is a process that is being followed closely by the international community. It is a process that is being followed closely by the international community.

Palestine Post

Military closure of Palestinian territories eased

■ About 35,000 Palestinian workers from Gaza and the West Bank would be allowed back into Israel. An Israeli army spokesman said that the closure imposed on the Palestinian territories was lifted except for Nablus.

But there is a debate about the numbers. Sources in the Palestine National Authority (PNA) said so far only 3000 Palestinian laborers have entered Israel. PNA officials are awaiting more work permits to be issued by Israel as it had previously promised.

Clinton exempts Gaza and West Bank products from tariffs

■ The latest law that was endorsed by the US Congress early this month to allow goods from Gaza and the West Bank to enter the United States market with tax exemption, is considered the first of its kind to be signed by a US president.

President Bill Clinton said "this trade initiative confirms the United States' commitment to help in providing new economic opportunities to the Palestinians."

A Republican deputy from Texas, Bill Archer praised the new legislation describing it "an essential indication to encourage the peace process."

The commercial exchange between the West Bank and Gaza and the US is still limited, but officials at the American Security of Commerce expect this exchange to be strengthened because of the new legislation.

Officials pointed out that the first beneficiaries of the new law will be Palestinian exporters of flowers and vegetables.

Academic siege on Palestinian territories

■ The head of Al Najah National University in Nablus, Dr Munther Salah said that Israeli authorities are "imposing an academic siege on the Palestinians."

The students and the teaching staff are still prevented from entering their educational institutions.

The students of the university come from all over the West Bank, but the blockade and the Israeli checkpoints have made it very difficult for them to enter the university.

Dr Salah criticized "the silence of the international academic institutions towards the Israeli violations against educational institutions in Palestine." Nevertheless, he appealed to them to bring pressure on Israel to lift the academic siege.

Taliban's military defeats lead to rising tension in Kabul

By Kenneth J. Cooper
LA Times-Washington Post
News Service

KABUL, Afghanistan—Weary residents of this battered capital, fed up with four years of factional fighting, thought peace and security had finally come to Kabul when the Taliban militia took control of the city. But just two weeks later, advances by the forces that the Taliban appeared to have routed have left many residents once again fearful of rocket attacks on their neighborhoods and firefights in their streets.

Those fears were reinforced at dusk last Monday night when the Taliban, a militant Islamic militia force, lit the sky over Kabul with a 20-minute burst from anti-aircraft guns, rocket-propelled grenades, automatic rifles and tracer bullets that were fired upward in every direction. There were no apparent targets.

North of Kabul, the forces of militia leader Ahmed Shah Massoud, military chief of the government that the Taliban chased out of Kabul, have regrouped and launched a counterattack, winning a string of battles and moving to within 40 miles of the city. One major Taliban-held installation, a military air base at Bagram, stands between Massoud's former government troops and a path to attack the capital.

Skirmishes also have been reported southeast of Kabul and near Herat, close to

Afghanistan's western border with Iran.

With the Taliban's defeats on the battlefield, tension has risen in Kabul. Militiamen assigned to enforce a curfew and guard roads into the city have appeared edgy, firing into the air to stop vehicles. Residents have begun to contemplate where they will seek refuge if the battle of Kabul resumes.

"I am worried, because if fighting takes place in Kabul, a lot of people will die from rocket shooting," said Haji Shamesalaha, a shopkeeper.

Another shopkeeper, Tawo-fiq, said that if fighting returned his family "will leave Kabul city and we will go to some other part of the country... Where there is peace, we will go there."

After Afghan guerrilla factions toppled a Soviet-installed communist government in 1992, they showed little concern about civilian casualties as they fought for control of Kabul. Even when one faction emerged victorious and Rabbani was installed as Afghan president, forces loyal to Gulbuddin Hekmatyar reduced much of south Kabul to rubble.

Until Hekmatyar joined the Rabbani government as prime minister this summer. And for the last year, the Taliban fired rockets into the city, killing bystanders almost daily, before ousting Rabbani and the other factions that made up his government.

In what may be a bid for the

political loyalty of Kabul residents, both sides in the current round of fighting said they want to avoid civilian bloodshed that would almost certainly result from battles in the city. But it is unclear how a replay of the last four years can be averted if Massoud's troops continue their victories and try to retake the capital.

Masoud Khalili, a Rabbani loyalist who is Afghanistan's ambassador in New Delhi, suggested the Taliban do as the former government's forces did on 27 September and withdraw. "I would hope the Taliban would leave Kabul and just retreat... to spare fighting in the city," Khalili said.

A Taliban spokesman stated similar reasons for the militia's retreat from two northern towns, Jhal Saraj and Charikar, where they face serious pressure. "We didn't want to fight for the sake of the people, therefore we withdrew," Amir Khan Muttaqi, the group's information minister, said in an interview Monday. "If we fight there, a lot of people will be killed."

Asked what the Taliban would do to protect civilians in the event of an attack on Kabul, Muttaqi replied: "If they attack on Kabul city, we want to fight with them in remote areas, like Bagram," the military air base.

Some fighting already has taken place around the base, about 30 miles north of Kabul, and it is likely to become a major battleground soon. The



Taliban forces try to make it to the north of the country

Taliban captured the base following its capture of Kabul.

Monday night, former government forces fought the Taliban near Sarobi, 40 miles southeast of Kabul, in an attempt to cut the main road that supplies the capital from Pakistan, BBC radio reported.

If successful, the attack would clamp an even stronger stranglehold on the capital than the one the Taliban applied in

September. The troops in recent days took control parts of the main road that leads north to Central Asia, a highway the Taliban secured only after taking Kabul.

In addition to staving off opposing military forces, the Taliban has been faced with popular uprisings at Bagram and other areas brought under its control in recent weeks, an indication that some Afghans

have already begun to chafe under the regime's strict interpretation of Islamic fundamentalism. In Jhal Saraj, residents rebelled against Taliban searches of homes for weapons. In Jalalabad, a town east of Kabul, opponents of Taliban rule have on occasion sneaked up on militiamen at night and slit their throats, according to one aid worker. ■

Weizman vows Israel will adhere to signed peace accords

By John Daniszewski and Rebecca Trounson
LA Times-Washington Post
News Service

CAIRO—Amid conflicting reports as to whether there may be an agreement on the long-delayed Israeli troop withdrawal from Hebron, President Ezer Weizman of Israel last Monday promised Egypt's leader that Israel will meet its obligations to the Palestinians under their signed peace accords.

Weizman offered Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak no timetable for action and conceded that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government has moved more slowly than some would like. "Better late than never," said Weizman, who has used his largely ceremonial post to try to nudge the peace process forward and ease the tension that has developed between Israel and the Arab world.

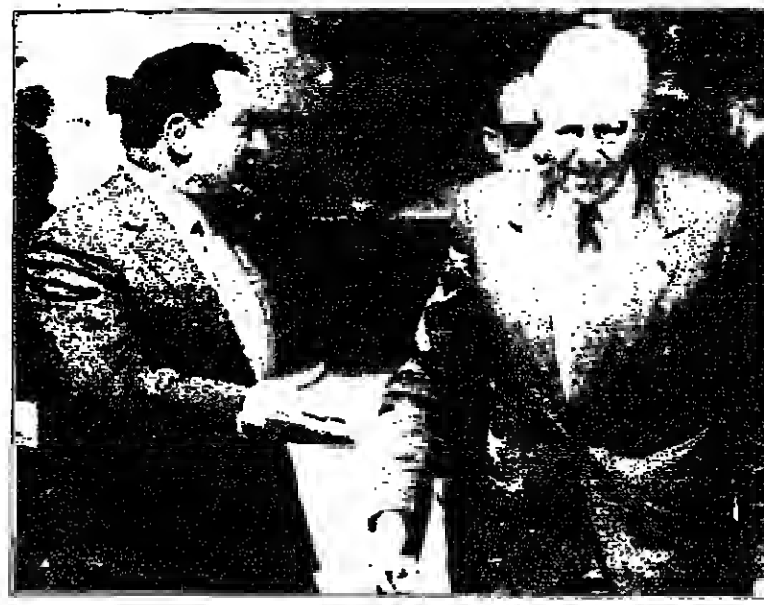
As Weizman and Mubarak met in Cairo, there was a frenzy of diplomatic activity taking place in Israel and Jordan, with US mediator Dennis Ross shuttling between Palestinian and Israeli officials to

hammer out a plan for an Israeli pull-back from Hebron.

Israeli chief negotiator Dan Shomron and his Palestinian counterpart Saeb Erekat continued to meet into the night in Jerusalem, with the Palestinian later indicating to Israeli Television that there had been no progress. But a more upbeat assessment came from Ed Abington, the US consul general in Jerusalem, who said "Things are going well. There are still some difficulties, but they are not insurmountable."

Although Weizman's trip to Cairo was coordinated with Netanyahu, the cordial two-hour meeting and lunch he shared with Mubarak emphasized the snub by the Egyptian leader of the Israeli prime minister.

Mubarak refused to attend a Washington summit called by President Clinton with Netanyahu. The Egyptian repeated to



Mubarak-Weizman: A show of strength

a news conference last Monday that he has no intention of meeting Netanyahu until Israeli troops withdraw from Hebron.

For his part, Weizman took pains to avoid appearing disloyal to the prime minister. He said his role in Egypt was to "heal certain splits, which everyone sees, with the largest

Arab country."

He was noncommittal when asked if Netanyahu had miscalculated in deciding to excavate an archaeological tunnel in Jerusalem. That act sparked violence that killed at least 75 and injured more than 1,000. "I am not here to analyze Mr Netanyahu's decisions," said

Weizman.

By inviting Weizman—whom he has known for 19 years—to Egypt instead of the prime minister, Mubarak was able to convey his support for the peace process, while signaling his displeasure with Netanyahu and his policies.

Mubarak said he accepted the pledge given by Weizman that Israel would honor its agreements. He said he did not press for details because he said he understands that the accords are still being negotiated between the Israelis and the Palestinian Authority led by Yasser Arafat. "I told (Weizman) that Egypt will continue to support the peace process as much as we can, until we reach a comprehensive settlement to the whole problem and until peace prevails all over the whole area," Mubarak said.

While offering the Arab side little of substance, Weizman stressed Israel's good faith. He said the road to peace could be rocky but that Palestinians and Israelis have no choice but to live with one another.

The Hebron redeployment has become the chief sticking

point between Israel and Palestinians, and for many Arabs it is an acid test of whether Netanyahu is sincere about continuing the peace process. The redeployment was scheduled for March but was postponed by the government of then Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres after suicide bombings by Muslim extremists in February and March killed at least 60.

Since his election in May, Netanyahu has said he supports the peace process but insists that Israel must have more safeguards for 450 or so Jewish settlers who live among more than 100,000 Palestinians in Hebron. The Palestinians, meantime, contend the already signed accord provided sufficient security guarantees and they say they do not want the internationally recognized accord renegotiated.

Meantime, on Monday, Arafat traveled to Jordan to confer with King Hussein and win support for his stance on Hebron. The King later visited Jericho at the invitation of Mr Arafat. The visit is believed to be the king's first public trip to the West Bank. ■

What the King told Netanyahu

By Thomas Friedman

THEY WERE all sitting around the dining table in the White House blue room. Benjamin Netanyahu had spoken as had Yasser Arafat and President Clinton. After waiters had passed sorbet and fruit, only His Majesty King Hussein was left to speak. It was the most important speech of the summit—one Mr Netanyahu didn't share with the Israeli public.

King Hussein was the Arab leader most receptive to Mr Netanyahu. The King preferred him over Shimon Peres, he had publicly appealed to the Arabs to give Mr Netanyahu a chance and he had warmly received the Likud leader in Jordan before and after the Israeli election.

But the King was steaming—not only because he believed that Mr Netanyahu was as incompetent as Mr Peres in delivering the trade deals Israel had promised to Jordan but, more important, because Mr Netanyahu's adviser Dore Gold had been to Amman just before the controversial Jerusalem tunnel was opened and had not mentioned it to the Jordanians. They took it as a personal affront and a violation of the Jordan-Israel peace treaty.

With that in mind, the King fixed his gaze on Mr Netanyahu, and while Mr Arafat, Mr Clinton and vice president Gore looked on in amazement, the King erupted: "I am deeply disappointed. I am sure you are too, Mr President, maybe president Mubarak [of Egypt] was right [not to attend the summit]. Maybe he was perceptive. Prime Minister Netanyahu put out maximalist positions before coming here and he kept to them in letter and spirit. I expected we would have done better."

King Hussein, according to several sources, added that he expected that Mr Netanyahu would have at least agreed to a target date for completing the Hebron negotiations and for the resumption of final-status talks.

"All of this would have been very meaningful," the King continued. "It would have been good to stand alongside you and announce this. And I speak now for all those who love peace, for the mothers and fathers, for my grandfather, for my great-uncle who started the dialogue with the Zionist movement. I speak for myself and I speak for Yitzhak Rabin, a man whom I had the great pride to call my friend. I speak for all the peoples who benefit from peace. All this good will is being lost. We are at the edge of the abyss, and regardless of our best efforts, we might be just about to fall into it—all of us."

The King said he didn't know how much more the Palestinians could take. They had few chances to work and were living under Israeli curfews. Then staring at Mr Netanyahu, the King said: "What we need, sir, is not the arrogance of power, but the vision that Yitzhak Rabin had. Maybe one day you'll have it. But today was a success for extremists and warmongers. I am very disappointed."

Security, King Hussein said, cannot be achieved by an Israeli "fortress mentality." It required mutual respect. Terrorism, he added, is born of despair. Without a greater willingness by Israel to give and take and see the big picture, he said, terrorism will likely explode anew.

The King added that Mr Netanyahu's efforts to reopen the Oslo Accords, agreed on by the previous Israeli government, put in doubt "everything that has been achieved." The King concluded: "Prime Minister Netanyahu, I am concerned for you. You are the leader of Israel. Can you seize the moment? Because if you can't, the real impact will be on all of us in this room."

There were two views of Mr Netanyahu in the Arab World after his election: A Syrian-led view that he was a menace to peace [just like the Syrians], and a Jordanian-Egyptian view that, the Jordanian-Egyptian view is crumbling, and that is a real strategic loss for Israel. Only a Hebron deal could begin to reverse that trend and force the Arabs to give Mr Netanyahu a second look.

By hanging tough in Washington, and not active under pressure, Mr Netanyahu built up chips at home. But does he have a strategy, and a will, to use those chips to strike a Hebron deal, while not under pressure? Will he ever use his rhetorical skills not just to explain away his mistakes but to build a real consensus among Israelis for moving forward?

King Hussein was dubious. He left the lunch muttering that Mr Netanyahu just didn't get it. The Israeli leader needs to prove him wrong. ■

New York Times

Taking Jerusalem by stealth

By Patrick Cockburn

AT 7.30 in the morning two Khalid Kurd Rashid, a jeweller in the Old City of Jerusalem, received a phone call to say that a house his family owned was being taken over by Jewish settlers.

When he arrived at the building it was too late. "We found the locks were smashed and there were armed guards in the house. We told the police this was our property, but they would not help. I was so angry I said there would be bloodshed." When one of his family tried to force his way into the building, he was hit by one of the guards the settlers had brought.

By now Mr Rashid had a very good idea who had taken over the house. Some years before, his family had been contacted, through middlemen, by an organisation much feared by Palestinians in Jerusalem. Known as Ateret Cohanim—the Crown of the Priests—it is dedicated to replacing Palestinians with Jews throughout the historic city. The Rashid family said they did not want to sell.

Backed by right-wing American Jewish millionaires and Israeli government money illegally siphoned off during the 1980s, according to a government inquiry, Ateret Cohanim has moved 600 settlers into the

Muslim quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem. The houses they have taken over are easily visible, because blue and white Israeli flags fly from the barred windows and the white, guarded, stand outside with sub-machine guns.

During the previous Labor government Ateret Cohanim was outwardly quiescent. But since Benjamin Netanyahu and the right won the election in May, it has restarted its takeover campaign. One house in Silwan, just below "Temple Mount" on the site of the historic City of David, was occupied by settlers on the very morning of the election, even before Mr Netanyahu was declared the official winner.

To the outside world the opening of the tunnel under the Old City may have appeared to be a single, if provocative, event which led to the violence in which 58 Palestinians and 15 Israelis died. But for the 25,000 Palestinians in the Old City, the tunnel was only one element in a three-pronged effort to replace them by Jews which has gathered force since Mr Netanyahu and his right-wing government were elected. The other elements in the offensive, part government, part private, are the takeover or demolition of

houses owned by Palestinians.

The occupation of the Rashid house, opposite the American Consulate on the Nahal Road in an historic part of the city, is not an isolated event. Arye Amit, the police chief of Jerusalem, says: "It is the beginning of the property war in East Jerusalem. There are many other buildings, I won't say how many, that have been purchased by settlers, or are in the process of being purchased."

Demolition of Palestinian-owned buildings has also increased, mainly at the initiative of the mayor of Jerusalem, Ehud Olmert who seizes on legal technicalities wherever possible. A community center and club for disabled children was knocked down near Herod's Gate in late August. At the meeting on 16 September which decided to open the tunnel, Mr Olmert raised the question of demolishing a house in Marounite Convent Street, on the edge of the Armenian quarter. The top storey has been deemed to have been built without a permit—which Palestinians as they are systematically refused—and has been destroyed.

It is not merely that those responsible for the opening of the tunnel share a common ideological purpose with those taking over and demolishing

Arab houses in Jerusalem. Often the same people are involved, according to Danny Seidman, a lawyer for Ir Shalem, a group which monitors takeovers in Jerusalem.

The group in charge of the tunnel—the Kotel Heritage Foundation—is closely linked to Ateret Cohanim, he says. "There is a confluence in terms of ideology, organization and personnel between the two."

Til this was denied at great length by Benjamin Netanyahu at the end of last week's summit in Washington. Of the opening of the gate into the Via Dolorosa: "We knocked down a wall 20 cm (8 in) thick. That's all we did. We opened a gate to an existing archaeological dig that had been completed years ago." He said the media was stirring up hatred by portraying Israel as the enemy of Islam, and repeating charges that the tunnel undermines the mosques and shrines on the great mezzanine platform known to Muslims as the Haram esh-Sharif and Jews as Temple Mount.

This is disingenuous. In practice the tunnel extends the Walling Wall, the main Jewish religious site to the north, into the Muslim quarter of the city. Its religious significance was underlined by the fact that it was paid for by the Ministry of Religious Affairs. The southern end of the tunnel is used by ultra-orthodox Jews who want to pray without the polluting presence of women at the Walling Wall, and skulls are distributed to visitors.

There is a further effect of opening a gate into the Via Dolorosa. The heavy security presence to protect visitors means that there is a line of Israeli police blocking the street.

They are backed by plainclothes security men sitting on a grey metal bench, and Palestinians who live in the neighbourhood are questioned when they go to their homes. They are already hampered by the presence 200 yards away of Israeli soldiers guarding a house belonging to Ariel Sharon, the Infrastructure Minister, which was taken over in 1987. It is increasingly difficult for them to live a normal life in the district.

One of those who attended the opening of the tunnel and is also heavily involved in Ateret Cohanim was Irving Moskowitz, a multi-millionaire from south Florida who owns hospitals and a bingo parlour in California. For years he has funded the takeover of Palestinian buildings, giving \$1m to buy Shepherd's Hotel in East Jerusalem in 1985 because, he told the Washington Post, he wanted "to do everything I possibly can to help reclaim Jerusalem for the Jewish people."

Most of the funds used by

Ateret Cohanim came from the last Likud government before it lost power in 1992. Danny Seidman said: "There is upwards of \$10 million, still missing." But Dr Moskowitz, who is a vocal opponent of the Oslo accords with the Palestinians, has also given Ateret Cohanim \$2.25 million. Investigation by Mr Rashid's lawyer last week revealed that the millionaire had paid for part of the building in Nablus road which was not owned by the Rashid family.

The previous Likud administration covertly gave funds to Ateret Cohanim to achieve its aim of ousting Palestinians from the Old City of Jerusalem and neighbouring historic districts like the Mount of Olives and the City of David (Silwan), and this funding is believed to have been resumed by the new government.

Against heavy Palestinian resistance, the takeover of the Old City will take a long time. But the very attempt has created great bitterness. "The city is a mosaic of communities," says Danny Seidman. "If takeovers continue, Jerusalem will become like Hebron, with no possibility of coexistence between Israelis and Palestinians." ■

The Independent

President of Belarus targets fledgling press

By James Rupert
LA Times-Washington Post
News Service

MINSK, Belarus—As Belarus's authoritarian president campaigns this fall to seize new political powers in this ex-Soviet country, his government is working to shut down the tiny independent press here.

During two years in office, President Alexander Lukashenko has taken control of the state press and broadcasting, the main sources of information for the 10 million Belarusians. But in the capital, a few independent press organs have survived, publishing frequently critical reports about the government.

Lukashenko is trying to force the legislature to grant him broad new powers, that diplomats and jurists here say would make him a dictator. He sees even a small, independent press in Minsk as a threat, a Western diplomat said, because it has helped inform and energize his opposition.

Last month Lukashenko's administration turned up the pressure against independent media. Within a few days, authorities shut down the only independent radio station, froze the bank accounts of at least five weekly newspapers, and forced one paper out of its office.

"They are using financial pressures to force us to close," said Vyacheslav Khodasovsky, chief editor of *Belaruski Rynok*, a business newspaper.

"They suddenly declared that all these newspapers are violating tax laws and have frozen our (bank) accounts and are hitting us with fines. I don't know how much longer we will survive. Maybe a few more months."

Lukashenko is unlikely to control public information absolutely. In the decade since Mikhail Gorbachev introduced openness in Soviet information policy, urban Belarusians have become used to hearing their news from varied sources.

Many Belarusians interviewed this year said they rely on the US-backed station Radio Liberty—or on Russian radio and television, which are rebroadcast here—as well as the local independent press.

But Lukashenko "clearly regards control of information as an essential part of getting dictatorial power," a Western diplomat said. Within months of winning election in 1994, he replaced editors of several state-owned newspapers with his appointees and took control of state broadcasting.

In December 1994, his administration barred reporting of a legislator's speech that accused Lukashenko of corruption, leaving newspapers to publish blank spots where the articles were to have appeared.

Last year Lukashenko ordered state-owned presses to stop printing several papers, including the weekly *Belaruskiya Gazeta*. Since then, "we've had to take our paper to Vilnius (the capital of neighboring Lithuania) to be printed," said Editor Alexander Volvachev.

In the paper's small warren of offices, young Belarusians hustled amid paper-cluttered desks, bookshelves and a few computers. Each week they lay out the paper's pages and drive them 125 miles north-west to Vilnius, then truck the papers back.

Newspaper distribution in Belarus is a state monopoly. So the independent papers hire unemployed people, often elderly pensioners, as street vendors. Recently police have been harassing vendors, sometimes confiscating their papers, Belarusian journalists said.

Lukashenko's pressure on the media aims in silence not only at opposition groups, but also the legislature, which opposes his attempt to broaden his powers. He dismissed the editor of the legislature's newspaper and placed it under control of the executive branch—moves that the legislature condemned as illegal.

Speaker Semyon Shariy, who constitutionally is the country's second-ranking official, has been unable to get air time on television.

Last spring, police beat reporters trying to cover demonstrations against Lukashenko and arrested photographers who seized their film. Police searched two newspapers' offices, confiscating notes and files.

Members who were away when the emergency meeting to ban the spots was called—the council quickly has reversed itself, telling station managers privately that they may broadcast the spots.

"It (the ban) was a mistake, and everyone has recognized this," said Alfonso Calleja, a council member who was absent during the vote to censor and said an official refutation is unnecessary.

However, the council publicly should acknowledge the error, insisted Blanca Butrago, president of the Confédération des Victimes, which sponsored the spots. And the council should step back from the position that it has the right to censor, she said. "Why don't they accept responsibility for creating a situation that was shocking and illegal?" she asked.

The association, which claims to represent 3,000 Nicaraguans and foreigners whose land was confiscated by Ortega's Sandinistas, protested last week in the Inter-American Press Association during a meeting in Los Angeles.

The association spent about \$5,000 to produce a dozen television and radio spots that highlight the Sandinistas' conflicts with the pope and other problems, members said. They are asking for contributions to pay for more air time as the election approaches.

Many political analysts play down the brush with censorship as a simple case of excessive enthusiasm. "They were just trying to keep the level of confrontation as low as possible," said Adolfo Calero, a former Contra leader who himself has spoken out strongly against the Sandinistas in general and confiscation in particular.

But Butrago considers the situation far more serious because the right to freedom of expression is still fragile in a country that suffered censorship under the Sandinistas and the dictatorship of Anastasio Somoza Debatayle that they overthrew.

"They were trying to keep us from telling the history of Nicaragua, the way the Sandinistas kept people from finding out as it was happening," she said.

Censorship attempt fails in Nicaragua

By Juanita Darling
LA Times-Washington Post
News Service

MANAGUA, Nicaragua—The footage begins like a campaign ad for former President Daniel Ortega, who is running for office again. The untitled revolutionary commander solemnly quotes the Bible: "By their works ye shall know them."

But it suddenly becomes something else, with the focus switching to images from the Ortega years, the 1980s: a rapid-fire series of stark, black and white photographs of rationing lines, bodies of soldiers killed by Contras halting the Ortega government and a uniformed Ortega greeting Cuban President Fidel Castro.

The one-minute anti-Ortega spot contrasts sharply with the feel-good videos of scrubbed young people waving flags to pop music that are the staple of most other political advertising during the 1996 presidential campaign, which is just wrapping up. And less than 24 hours after the anti-Ortega ad first appeared, the Supreme Electoral Council ordered it—and three others like it—off the air.

"We have noted with concern that some videos do not comply with the electoral ethics rules of creating a climate of harmony, nor do they encourage civic values in the Nicaraguan people," stated Council Secretary Cyril Omeir Green in a letter to television station managers.

The decision caused an immediate uproar in Nicaragua, a country that over the last six years of democracy has prided itself on throwing off a long tradition of media censorship. Under that pressure—and with the return of council

members who were away when the emergency meeting to ban the spots was called—the council quickly has reversed itself, telling station managers privately that they may broadcast the spots.

"It (the ban) was a mistake, and everyone has recognized this," said Alfonso Calleja, a council member who was absent during the vote to censor and said an official refutation is unnecessary.

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Ortega

Women's right to pick husband under siege in Pakistan

By John-Thor Dahlburg
LA Times-Washington Post
News Service

LAHORE, Pakistan—Shumaila and Waqia tell in love, and decided to wed despite her parents' objections. One hot day last May, she and her sweetheart signed the formal contract that is the centerpiece of the Muslim ritual of marriage.

It should have been the beginning of a happy union between the 19-year-old Lahore student of nursing and the accountant eight years her senior. But it wasn't.

In one of the handful of hotly disputed cases about a woman's right to wed the man of her choice, the couple are riding overwhelmingly Muslim

they contend, a woman of any age may only marry with the consent of a wali, or male guardian.

A woman's father, or even her brother, should decide the best match for her, even if she is a legal adult, fundamentalist clerics and their sympathizers contend. "The house of a father is always the safest place for a daughter," Malik Mohammed Nawaz, attorney in a case similar to Shumaila Munir's, told a Lahore court earlier this year.

"A marriage without the consent of the guardian should be regarded as an invalid one." Such an interpretation is flatly at odds with Pakistani law, women's rights activists say, and also may have no justification in Islam's holy texts.

Munir's father lodged a complaint with the police over the supposed kidnapping of his daughter and the commission of an act of sin.

On 26 September, when the couple appeared in court in Lahore, Munir was arrested. The day of Munir's arrest, the Lahore High Court ruled that investigations of adultery launched against two other Muslim women, Shahina Zafar and Ayesha Ijaz, who also married without the consent of a male guardian, had been "rightly" filed and that police could carry them to their "logical conclusion."

If convicted of adultery under laws enacted by the military regime of former dictator Gen. Zia ul-Haq as part of his campaign to "Islamize" Pakistan, the women could be sentenced to 100 lashes with a whip and then stoned to death. According to human rights activists here, however, such a sentence has never been carried out.

The controversy exploded earlier this year when Salma Wahid, the 22-year-old daughter of Abdul Wahed Rupri, a wealthy

At a time that should be among the most joyous in her life, the young woman is consumed with fear that her parents will try to abduct her and abort her unborn child

Enacted in 1961, Pakistan's Muslim Family Laws Ordinance allows any woman 16 or older to marry and makes no mention of a wali or the necessity of his approval. According to Muslim scholars, Imam Abu Hanif, the 8th century founder of the school of Islamic jurisprudence that is followed in Pakistan, likewise decreed that an adult female could marry any person of equal social status without her parents' blessing.

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In April, the bride's father, uncles and several armed companions showed up at Jahangir's company and tried to drag her away, but they were stopped by police.

"They preached Islam but their own acts were against the teachings of the religion," Wahid told Pakistani journalists. A Lahore tribunal later ruled she could live at the Dastak shelter while her case was being decided, but it barred her from seeing her husband.

According to Wahid, her rich and influential father arranged for the arrest and incarceration of her husband for four days.

"They also secured Arshad's signatures on divorce papers at gunpoint," she told local journalists. "The paper was written by my father."

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Wahid, a star



Inter.Con 'cleans up the world'

● AMMAN (Star)—Under the patronage of Mr Ahmad Obeldat, Hotel Inter-Continental Jordan sponsored the "Clean Up the World Campaign" held on Friday 27 September at Amman National Park in cooperation with Friedrich Nauman Foundation and the Jordanian Environmental Society.

The hotel provided participants with T-shirts printed with its logo and the logo of the campaign. The Inter-Continental later hosted a reception for the participants during which it received a special achievement award for its efforts in the campaign.



The dialectics of sadness

By Munther Hamdan
Star Staff Writer

Sadness is inherent. It is becoming a necessity, a language. The work of art becomes, on behalf of the artist, the modern world's agonies and its ever growing discrepancies. This is what the brush strokes of the Iraqi artist, Samirah Abdel Wahab, created. Currently displayed at Baladna Art Gallery,

Abdel Wahab's abstract creations, entitled *Colored Silence*, are loaded with meanings.

The suggestiveness of the works lead the onlooker to a world of his own. A stream of memories flow in mixing the different life experiences and thoughts together. The structure that results is quite complex that it should be approached with a probing eye into details and different colors.

"The state of happiness and joy hinders the artist's ability to continue the process of creativity," Abdel Wahab told *The Star*. She added that sadness is a fertile source of ideas and emotions.

The sadness that featured her paintings is celebrated. It is not concealed or alluded to, it is there in every stroke and color. This may well account for her decision to title her exhibition "Colored Sadness."

The sad and silence atmosphere she successfully moved on paper is

one "that precedes the storm." A feeling of contempt with a gruesome life will eventually cause a deeply heaving paintings to explode.

"I did not intend silence to be a symbol of immovability. It is an ongoing process of contemplation that starts with self-searching and concludes with the absolute," she stressed.

A dual structure applied in her paintings gives a sense of the conflict between two contradictory ideas. According to Abdel Wahab, such structure reflects an internal dialogue. She added that it is the viewer's choice in the end to determine who the two sides are and how they feel towards each other.

The different emotional contexts and charges impose themselves on the artists when choosing his or her colors. Not only black and blue are the most appropriate colors to express sadness or anger but there are also other colors. The distinctiveness of the black is its "comprehensiveness as it combines in itself all colors."

From the outset, Al Wahab adopted the expressive surrealistic style of painting. She said that "the apple figure I used is a symbol of a lost paradise." She was really attempting to shed light on human suffering and sadness. The human figures, she added, as in one of her works, *Paradise Lost*, were painted without heads. The missing parts stand as an expression of the incompleteness of the circle of life.

"Any artist can develop through his or her own works," she said.

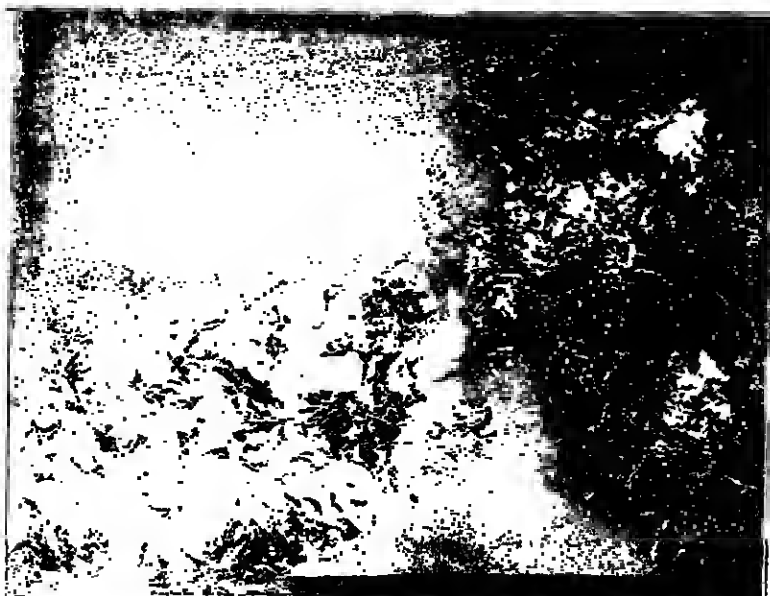
The artist's shift from surrealism to abstraction is the outcome of a long experience in



Abdel Wahab

pursuit of truth. Abstract works are not haphazardly done as many can think but they are harder than any other form of art. "I found that I can express myself better through the abstract, but abstraction is not an end in itself."

Abdel Wahab is an accomplished Iraqi artist. She was born in Baghdad and graduated from College of Economics and Administration. She studied painting in the Fine Art Institute and then held a large number of one-man-shows and group exhibitions around the world.



The Dictionary of Art

A comprehensive historical reference

AMMAN (Star)—The artists and scholars of the world combined their efforts to produce a 34-volume masterpiece. *The Dictionary of Art* is for the connoisseur, the researcher, curator, dealer and libraries. It is everything you wanted to know about art from the pre-history stage right up till the modern period. Jordanian artists who contributed articles to the dictionary include HRH Princess Wijdan, Muhammad Al Asad, Adnan Al Hadidi and Fawzi Zayyadin.

The dictionary is the brainchild of Macmillan's, the London-based publishing house which, together with the help of 6700 artists and scholars around the world, has been working on the text for the past 14 years. They are now able to offer the art world one of the best publications complete with comprehensive documents, perspectives and art-historical references.

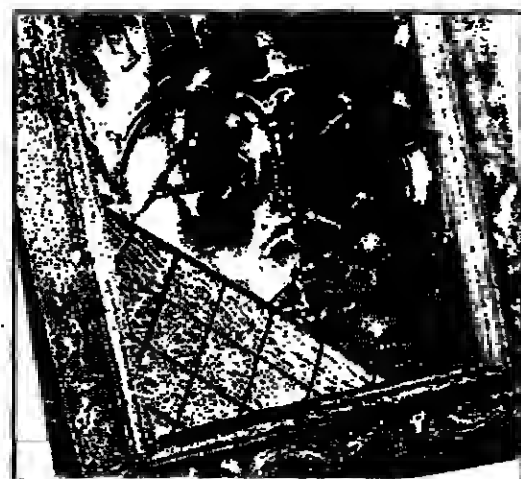
After publishing the successful *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, Macmillan's thought of publishing an art work that would be equally panoramic. *The Dictionary of Art*, currently in the process of printing, will spare readers the efforts of looking in the library for different kinds of art books.

The Dictionary of Art tackles a wide range of art subjects that are written by specialists from 14 countries. The 41,000 articles (alphabetically organized) touch upon art in the different

social, political and cultural contexts as the traditional aspects of art differ from one country to the other. The book gives the reader a clearer vision about the work of art in the context of the country it is created in.

The artistic movements and theories of art are highlighted at length. The dictionary shows how these developed and who promoted them. A section is devoted to the decorative arts making the dictionary the first reference to "integrate the study of the decorative art with the defined fine arts," said Jane Turner, the editor of the works. Some 800 articles of the book shed light on the importance of the themes, forms and subject matters in art.

The dictionary has a visual library that consists of a large number of images "not found in the standard reference sources." About 15000 illustrations turn the dictionary into "the largest single collection in any art-historical publication." Readers will find what they want in this publication easily as it has a 900-page index. The indexed topics include people (artists patrons, collectors, writers), organizations (workshops, partnerships, factories, and manufactures), places (towns, vil-



lages, sites, churches, temples, tombs, houses, shrines, gardens, etc) and other subjects (styles, art forms, materials, techniques, theories, concepts etc).

The civilizations of the world, artists, unearthed archaeological sites, architecture, countries' traditions are all documented in details. Researchers can greatly benefit from the 300,000 bibliographic entries of the book.

According to the editor, *The Dictionary of Art* not only presents the most up-to-date scholarship and research but also accurately reflects recent changes that have dramatically reshaped the political map of the world. "The world and our view of it have changed dramatically in the last 25 years and just as the political map of the globe has been redrawn so, too, have the boundaries of art. Old assumptions have been questioned, opinions revised, new facts brought to light and whole new areas explored for the first time."



Presenting wedding traditions around the world

AMMAN (Star)—A colorful function entitled *Wedding Traditions Around the World* was held 9 October at the Amra Hotel under the patronage of HRH Princess Sarvath El Hassan. The show, organized by the Pakistan Embassy in conjunction with the Young Muslim Women Association (YMWA), was a fund charity event for the Young Muslim Women Association of Jordan.

About 25 embassies and people of different nationalities and Jordanian designers participated in the event. The participants and groups presented a tableau each of the wedding ceremony held in their countries.

The show included the costumes and ceremonial acts and gestures accompanied by the traditional music of the country or region. An orderly sequence of presentation made the two-

hour ceremony a real pleasure. It ended with a raffle draw with lots of attractive prizes including three air tickets offered by Pakistan International Airlines, Qatar Airways and Royal Jordanian.

It was the first time that such a show presented in Jordan receives such a big attendance. Seats were sold out several days before the event. A gala evening and entertainment added a special flavor.

The Pakistani Ambassador's wife, Mrs Maher Naqvi personally supervised and planned the event.

In her welcoming speech, Mrs Naqvi expressed her thanks and appreciation to Princess Sarvath and assured full



Princess Sarvath (right), and Princess Rahma (left) with Mrs Naqvi

support to the noble work of the YMWA. The secretary of the YMWA, in her speech also paid tributes to Her Royal

Highness in supporting the activities of the Association in the fields of special education and women's training.

Sweiss honored as human rights activist

AMMAN (Star)—The Jordan Writers Association recently awarded Dr Sleiman Sweiss, the Munther Anabawi Prize For Human Rights. The prize was given to Mr Sweiss last week during the annual ceremony of the association in honor of the winners of the associations' prizes.

Mr Sweiss is a human rights activist who has participated in workshops, lectures and written profusely on the subject. Together with Jordanian educationalists, Mr Sweiss is studying and analyzing the contents of school textbooks with regards to human rights.

Mr Sweiss was born in Fubeis in 1950 and obtained his PhD in Sociology from the Sorbonne University in Paris. In 1979 he and others formed committees for the defense of democratic freedoms in Jordan. He became a member of Amnesty International in 1990 and a member of the administrative committee of the Arab Human Rights Organization in 1992. Since 1994, Mr Sweiss presented a weekly radio program in Arabic on the subject of human rights.



Sweiss

ICS children discover the horrors of pollution in Aqaba

AMMAN (Star)—Sixth Year children at the International Community School (ICS) gave an interesting and thought provoking assembly to the rest of the school. Inspired by a presentation they had from a member of the Jordan Royal Ecological Divers Society (JREDS), who participated in the Clean Up Dive, the children decided they needed to share their new found knowledge with their school mates.

The students are presently doing environment studies but they were unaware of the extent of the pollution in Aqaba. The beaches, the underwater world and the palm groves are all in a serious danger. Most of the children were unaware of just how amazing the treasures that lie beneath the waves in the Red Sea really are. Exquisite slides by Mohammed Al Momany, photographs by Julia Reinhold, posters, books and other relevant items lent by HRH Basma Ali Nayef Al Hasshem added another dimension to the children's learning.

The children also performed a play on the fragile ecosystem in Aqaba. Heart felt poetry describing what could happen if pollution continues to ravage our planet left the parents amazed at just how much their children were aware of the problem. Princess Basma Ali, chairperson of the executive board of JREDS and a former ICS pupil herself, enjoyed the children's presentation which was alive, fresh and real.

It was written acted and initiated by the children who are aged between 10 and 11 years old. The eyes of the nursery children were wide with wonder and disbelief, and questions like "why do adults pollute?" were their genuine concern. Children learning from their peers really grasp the message.



Scrapbook Child abuse: the responsibility of all

By Osama El-Sherif

TWO LOCAL news items this week shocked me. Both had to do with child abuse and both highlighted the gravity of this problem in our society.

One item said that a father of a five-year-old Ashrafayah girl was being questioned by the police for allegedly physically abusing his child. The report said the girl, who was examined by doctors, suffered bruises and lacerations to her face, back, arms and legs. The father's motives, as if having one that could justify his crime, were frivolous. I am not sure if the law in this country is harsh enough on such people. But what I do know is that the damage that this so-called father inflicts on his child exceeds physical pain, which is treatable. The scars that last for a lifetime are the emotional ones. Child abuse is just now becoming a public issue in Jordan and other societies in transition. For decades it has been taken for granted, a right that falls within the prerogative of parents and even school teachers. The irony is that some parents used to object to corporal punishment at school only to indulge in physical abuse of their own children at home.

The second item which caught my attention is about a mother and a father who disposed of the body of their 10-month-old baby by placing it in a suitcase and leaving it in front of a mosque in Aqaba. Police were able to track down the parents who said their baby daughter was born sick and frail and since they had failed to register the birth and could not pay the hospital bills when the child finally died disposing of her body the way they did seemed the most appropriate course of action.

I see this a real tragedy for all; for the parents and for our society as well. One cannot sympathize with the parents who should never have abandoned their child. But at the same time one feels sick that social and economic pressures could force a father and a mother to leave their child to die without even attempting to provide her with proper medical care. Here I think we all, as a community, share in the abuse.

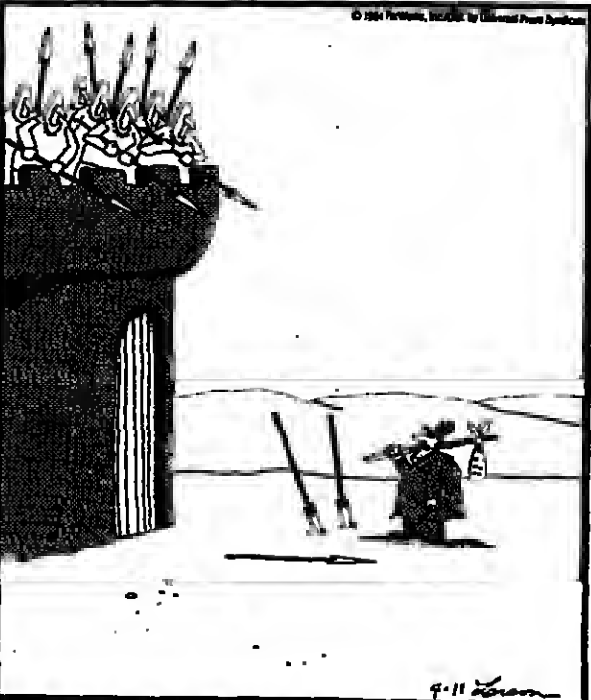
For most of us the image of a helpless child being whipped or beaten by an adult, particularly if that adult is a relative, is daunting. It elicits feelings of anger, disgust and determination to do something about it. On the other hand, we must all realize an equally horrible form of abuse is the one practised by the community at large. When a child sleeps without supper, or is forced to leave school to help his parents, or is denied basic needs that we all strive to provide to our own children. That kind of abuse, in my view, also leaves indelible mark on the child's character. We cannot deny our responsibility!

THE FAR SIDE

By GARY LARSON



Circa 1500 A.D.: Horses are introduced to America.



"Hold on there! I think you misunderstood—I'm Al Tiley... the bum."

AGENDA

Exhibitions

■ Works by Ghada Dahdaleh at The French Cultural Center, continues till 29 October.

■ Works by Shreefa Hind Bin Nasser at Jordan Arts and Crafts Center/Artisans, continues till 13 November.

■ Exhibition by Muhammad Nasrallah, at Darat al Funun, opened on 23 November.

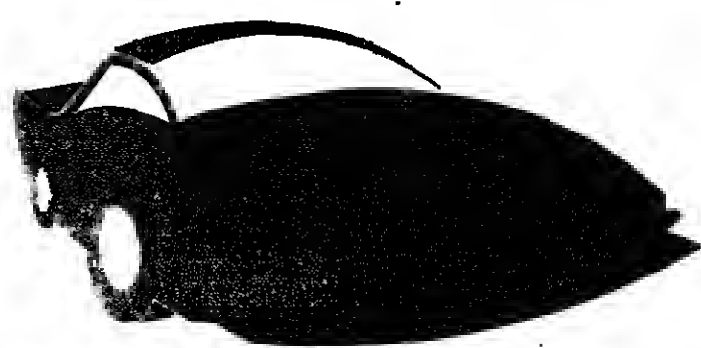
■ Exhibition and Sale of lithographs by David Roberts, old postcards and photographs on Jerusalem, at Um El Khandum, right off

the Airport highway, on the way to Arabian Horse Club, first left at the top of the hill. Friday 18 October from 11 am onwards.

■ Works by Nabeel Shihadeh, at Darat al Funun, continues till 13 November.

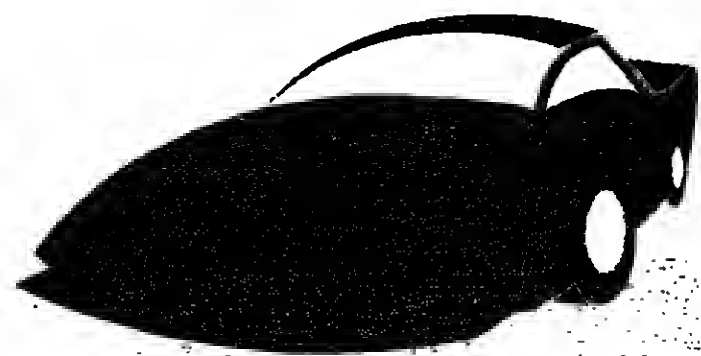
■ Exhibition by Muhammad Nasrallah, at Darat al Funun, opened on 23 November.

■ Trio Thierry Robin at The French Cultural Center, 20 October, at 8 pm.



Auto '97

Supplement



Prince Faisal opens International Motor Show '97



● Cutting the ribbon.
HRH Prince Faisal strolls in the hall after he opened Jordan's Motor Show '97

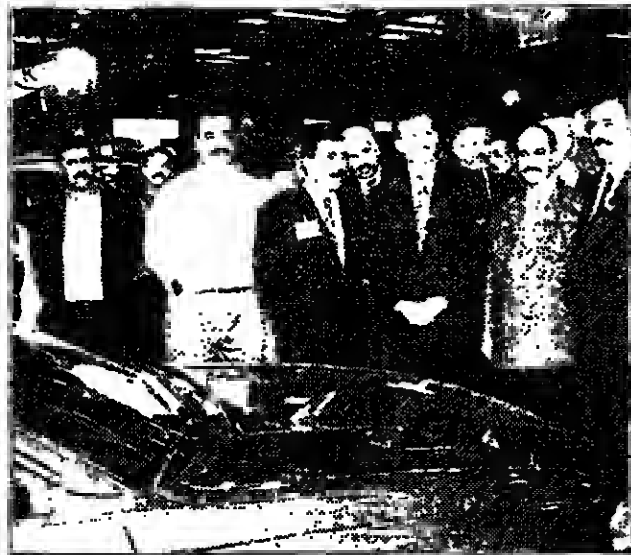
AMMAN (Star)—His Royal Highness Prince Faisal Bin Al Hussein opened last Monday the International Motor Show '97, which is being held at the Amman International Motor Show between October 14-20.

The activities of the show are held daily from 10 am to 10 pm. A large number of motor fans are paying a visit to what is seen as the largest show in the country. There are 26 local car importing companies as well as spare-parts dealers that are participating in the event.

The Director of the Amman International Motor Show, Mr. Mohammad Kheir said that the show is annually organized and over the past years it gained an unparalleled reputation regarding the quality of cars displayed.

The show is aimed at keeping the public informed of the latest developments in motor technology and giving them an opportunity to see the types of cars that are available, their prices, and the services they have, Mr. Kheir added.

The management of the Amman International Motor show is working closely with the General Association of Car Agents. ■



Motor Show '97: Main event for car dealers and enthusiasts

Mohammad Al Zaro

THE ANNUAL Motor Show which opened last Tuesday at the Amman International Motor Show, is considered by many as the main event on the car dealers agenda.

The fierce competition between car agencies has been gaining more "horsepower" more than ever before. There is the introduction of a wide range of new models targeting the different segments of Jordan's small yet dynamic car market. This is in addition to special offers, bargains and prizes.

The first beneficiary of the show is as usual the consumers. Strolling through the show potential customers seem to be enjoying the diversity of well-equipped cars that are sold at competitive prices.

The motor show this year was supposed to witness the debut of a range of new models bearing the tri-star symbol of Mercedes-Benz.

Because of some logistical reasons, the leading German car maker is not participating. However, there are plenty of other stars. The other German giant, BMW is there in full swing.

Presenting an all new model, BMW has the latest 5-series on show presenting the innovative face of technology in the car world today.

Another European car that is receiving a great deal of admiration in the Jordanian market is the Rover 400.

A car of comfort, style and prestige, what distinguishes the British built Rover is its smooth performance as the award-winning 2.0 liter engine (the 420s).

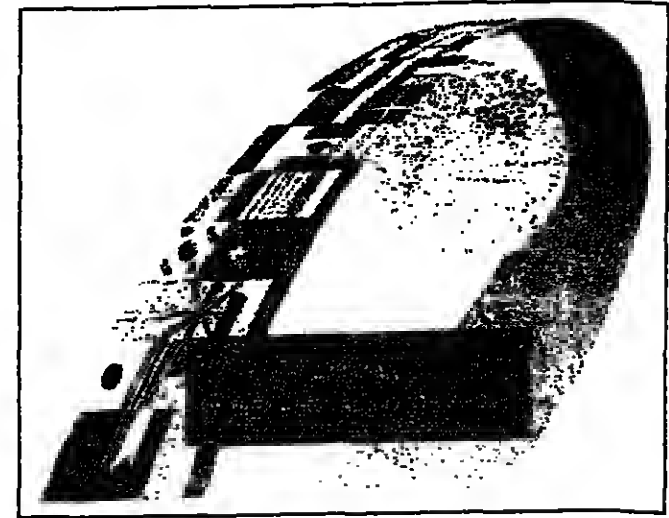
The Japanese

Toyota has a new model to uncover. Paseo is a small sports car with a unique personality at a really competitive price.

Hyundai, the market leader is presenting its family of cars focusing on the new coupe. This is another challenge by the up and coming Korean car industry that is aiming at entering the ranks of the well established European and Japanese car industries.

The visitor to the 1997 Motor show is getting his money's worth. It has more than 20 wings featuring cars, accessories, and associated products under one roof. The show continues till 20 October. ■

Mr Al Zaro is the editor of the Amman-based Auto Motor



MOTOR SHOW 97

● Jordan's Motor Show '97 is the place to be this year, for many cars are appearing on the scene. And not all of them are imported. Jordan is becoming a car manufacturer, or more precisely, it is starting to assemble cars. The first of such motors is the Range Rover Discovery. The Land Rover is the first of its kind to be assembled outside Britain. The proud makers in Jordan are Asid A. Malhas & Sons, Abedel Ilah & Ali Co.

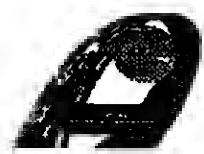


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Auto '97

Supplement



With more oomph, Hyundai could be a contender

By Paul Dean
LA Times-Washington Post
News Service

HYUNDAI IS on a roll toward respectability, with the 1996 Elantra station wagon, its joint-test, best-looking low-bucks vehicle to date.

Not bad for a subcompact built in South Korea, a republic famous for "kimchi" souffles but infamous for producing rattling misfits that would be considered dubious bargains if they weren't included in 10,000 frequent flier miles per breakdown. You'd be vacationing in Monte Carlo the first week.

Early Elantras wallowed with the worst of them and were hung, drawn and quartered by critics for being rickety and snail-powered with an automatic transmission that jolted occupants to the point of whiplash.

But this Elantra wagon, generally, is a hoot.

Looks come close to being a Ford Contour cuddling a baby bullfrog. The form is attractive—quirky from this angle, almost voluptuous in that light—and far from being just another boring Asian soap bubble. There's also a very serious roof rack that might have been borrowed from a Buick Roadmaster and could double as carrying handles in tight parking situations.

For less than \$16,000 you get the stuff of little BMWs. Tilt steering and dual air bags. Independent front and rear suspension. Alloy wheels and cruise control. Power windows, mirrors and locks. Air condi-

tioning and a six-speaker sound system. And anti-lock disc brakes for a few bucks more.

Handling falls a few raised eyebrows, beneath unbelievable for a car of this purpose in this stricken price range. Think Honda, think Toyota. Then give Hyundai credit for working a concert of changes to the underpinnings—join that independent suspension with stabilizer bars to a multi-link system at the rear—and carefully calibrated to keep the car tight and firm and free.



of wayward repositioning whether its maneuvering be mundane or emergency.

The Elantra wagon has brakes that would stop a barge. Rack and pinion power steering keeps the car precisely where pointed without a hint of road surface or weight-transfer wanderlust. So the driving experience becomes a succession of questions to sell:

■ Are we sure the rock-hase version of this wagon costs only \$14,000?

■ Has part-owner Mazda become a full partner in Hyundai and rehanded a 626?

■ Is this, in fact, a Hyundai?

The latter, sadly, remains an easy answer.

For no matter what improvements Hyundai has been making to styling, creature comforts and ancillary mechanicals, its power trains remain more embarrassing than a bases-loaded walk.

From earlier drives aboard Hyundai's Accent, Sonata and freshman Elantras, we suspect the trouble may lurk with the trans.

the brakes for whippet starts. Yet 12.3 seconds was the very best time for accelerating to 60 mph.

And that's an average two seconds slower than times we have posted with Neon, Escort, Saturn, Corolla and Impreza.

We switched to an Elantra sedan—220 pounds lighter than the wagon—with a 5-speed manual that typically squeezes

the rear hatch opens and rises easily and lifter is low. The interior—the bolstering and grasp of seats, the clear view of instruments and short reach to critical controls and buttons—is quite warm, and pleasantly covered with mid-quality plastics and fabrics.

There's head, hip and shoulder room aplenty with all dimensions a notch or an improvement on the competition. Accommodations for maps, gloves, parking tickets and Frappuccinos is generous. And there's a net in the rear compartment so that Playmate coolers and the odd grapefruit do not ricochet.

In the years ahead, Hyundai will broaden its range to Japanese and American levels. There's a minivan planned for 1998. Also a compact sport utility, a coupe, a convertible—and South Korea's first luxury sedan with a 4.0-liter V-8.

We trust that current transmission diseases aren't mechanically transmittable. ■

Worse, the Elantra's mid-range acceleration from 40 mph to 70, often the sudden call of freeway travel, took 13 seconds. That's just not enough to escape advancing semis or to catch the guy in the Passat who flipped you off for dragging your butt in traffic and delaying his choceomartini.

Again, we point a finger at the transmission because it slapped and wheezed and hunted for the right gear or slipped into lethargy and manic-depression every time we kicked its ribs.

We made several runs with a 4-speed automatic Elantra wagon, in both modes, sport and conventional, and with engine revs built high against

mission. No matter mechanical or automatic, once worked by Hyundai they simply never seem to deliver performance promised by the horsepower.

In the 1996 Elantra, oomph has been elevated to 130 horsepower. That's two ponies less than a base Dodge Neon sedan, but more powerful than other subcompact wagons: Ford's Escort (110 horsepower), Saturn (124), Toyota Corolla (105) and Subaru Impreza (110). And torque delivered by Elantra is superior to all but Neon.

We made several runs with a 4-speed automatic Elantra wagon, in both modes, sport and conventional, and with engine revs built high against

Monitoring air pressure of the tyre is a necessity for safety

LATEST STUDIES conducted in Britain revealed that nine cars out of 10 are driven on tyres either with a lower or higher air pressure than is the required standard.

If this pressure is not checked regularly, the driver could run the risk of having an accident. Both his life and the life of pedestrians will be in danger.

"Rack Motors Association," which carried out the studies explained that air pressure in the two-third of the tyres that they have checked is five times higher than the required standard (PSI).

Policemen and tyres' experts think that the ceiling of this pressure should not exceed 5PSI higher or lower than average recommended by the tyres manufacturer.

John Lee, a consultant in the "Tyres Distributors Association" in Britain warns from the risks of driving the car with lower or higher tyre pressure than the normal average.

These risks most probably could lead to a disaster in the case of high speed.

If the air pressure is only two units higher than average, the car that is going faster will run the risk of swerving, the sudden shaking of the tyre and eventual erosion.

The studies included air pressure tests of a sample of 8000 cars. It showed that some who drove their cars while their tyre air pressure was lower or higher than required, had never checked the pressure in advance.

However, about 22 percent said they make their usual test weekly, while 44 percent said that they check every month.

The results of these studies produced a wide public response in Britain. A parliamentary committee even submitted a proposal to the concerned authorities to use a "check air pres-

sure in your tyre," guidance plates.

Parliamentary members called on tyres manufacturing companies to patronize this campaign because of its importance to reduce road accidents and maintain safety for people on the road.

However, even if drivers give attention to checking or monitoring air pressure in their car tyres, they will still face another major problem—the inaccurate monitoring equipment used to measure pressure at gas stations.

Experts say the equipment is to blame for the lack of accuracy. They say that these stations must be supplied with more accurate apparatuses.

An expert who made a study on gauging air pressure at fuel stations, concluded that the inaccuracy in these equipments amounts to 2.5 PSIS, while inaccuracy at others even reached 10 PSIS.

Experts recommended drivers to make a quarterly checking of air pressure in the tyres, at least once a month. If the driver has no confidence in the equipments available at gas stations, he can buy his own monitoring instruments.

The driver should bear in mind that the heat which results from the movement of the tyre while driving a car leads to the expansion of air inside the tyre. Thus, the average of air pressure inside it will increase.

Monitoring the pressure of the tyre after a short period of stopping the car will give false data compared to the actual level.

That's why tyre manufacturing companies recommend drivers to monitor pressure of the tyres before driving the car, that is the time when the air inside the tyre is cold. ■

Motor Show '97

Sebring is Chrysler's touch of open-air class

By Tom Incantalupo
LA Times-Washington Post
News Service

AMONG CHRYSLER Corp.'s smart moves in the 1980s was to recognize the strong interest in convertibles that remained among Americans and to capitalize on it. Its K car-based LeBaron, introduced in 1982 and the first mass-produced domestically built convertible since 1976, was a smashing success.

Competitors soon followed. Ford revived the convertible Mustang a year later, and it quickly surpassed the LeBaron in sales. But the two, including an extensively changed though still K car-based LeBaron that debuted in 1987, have led the pack since then. Today, Americans buy more than half the convertibles sold in the world, or almost 200,000 a year.

Whether the LeBaron's descendant, our subject for the day, expands the market even more remains to be seen, but it surely seems to be a better car in every way.

Introduced last spring as a '96 model, the Sebring convertible is more of a luxury car than a sporty car, and, in that sense, carries on the LeBaron tradition. Chrysler says it is not intended to compete with muscle-car convertibles like the Mustang or roadsters like the Mazda Miata. Structural reinforcement is pretty good; there is some shuddering on bumps, as in most convertibles, but our tester's body usually felt tight enough to justify Chrysler's claim of coupe-like structural rigidity. Chrysler says this car was designed from the ground up as a convertible and is not a converted coupe, as are some competitors.

Two versions are offered: the JX, starting and the JXi, which we drove, starting at \$24,675 plus freight.

The JX is available only with a 2.4-liter, 150-horsepower four-cylinder engine; the JXi comes with that engine or an optional 2.5-liter,

168-horsepower V-6. Our tester had the latter, and, while it is not particularly quiet or pleasant-sounding, it works with the four-speed automatic transmission to deliver quick-enough starts and strong-enough passing power. But there are occasions, such as lugging uphill, when the 2.5 seems a bit overtaxed by the extra weight inherent in convertibles.

The Sebring convertible is mechanically related to Chrysler's Cirrus, Stratus and Breeze family of sedans, and not, as is the Sebring hardtop, to the Dodge Avenger and Mitsubishi Galant. The Sebring convertible is built in Mexico, the hardtop alongside the Avenger and Galant by Mitsubishi in Illinois.

Air conditioning is standard

in the JX, as are a glass rear window with defroster, power windows and a six-speaker stereo radio. The JXi adds anti-lock brakes, wider tires on larger-diameter wheels, power locks with a remote controller, power driver's seat, leather seating surfaces, fog lamps, additional courtesy lamps, power mirrors, a better stereo with a cassette player and some other odds and ends.

Inside, storage space is ample, with a deep, hinged center console, an open tray forward of the gear selector, and door pockets. You have a choice of two cup holders, or one cup holder and one ashtray insert.

Although some space is lost to the top's storage compartment, the trunk is quite roomy. Storage space for people is generous, too, with a roomy

rear seat—a rarity in convertibles.

Unusual in any car is the seat-belt system anchored in the front seats instead of the pillars. Proponents say it's just as effective as the more familiar standard-mounted system, and it has the clear advantage of making access to the rear seat easier.

Options in the JXi are few, including a better stereo and a CD player.

The JXi also has a firmer "touring" suspension and a steering system that Chrysler describes quite accurately as "firm feel." Like the JX, it is speed-sensitive variable assist; their ratios are the same. Our JXi's ride was on the firm side but far from uncomfortable. ■

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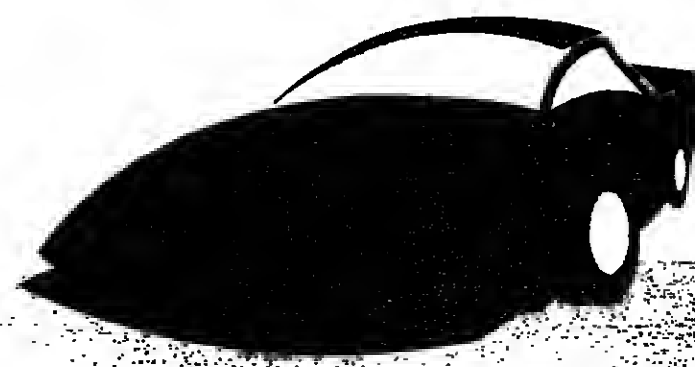


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Auto '97

Supplement



Will Mazda's sporty MX-6 be on road in future?

By Tom Incantalupo
LA Times-Washington Post
News Service

SPORTY-CAR buyers are a notoriously fashion-conscious lot and a group whose ranks are thinning. So, those types of cars have a short shelf life and, in some cases, a very uncertain future.

The Mazda MX-6 is an excellent example of that, as is its mechanical cousin, the Ford Probe. Sales of both have trailed off, and Mazda, at least, is thinking of killing its version.

If you're a prospective buyer, that alone might divert you elsewhere. You might not want a car whose look is no longer fresh and whose future might be non-existent. But if your concern is parts availability in the future, you probably have little to worry about: the MX-6 is also a mechanical relative of the Mazda 626, a sedan that is likely to be redesigned in coming years but not likely to be discontinued.

And, there's an upside to consider in owning an MX-6: It's a really nice car, beautiful in our opinion, practical to live with, fun to drive.

Not cheap by any means but, by today's standards, reasonable. Our tester was just about the most expensive 1996 version you can buy, an LS equipped with a V-6 engine, air conditioning, power sunroof, power windows and locks with a remote control, and an alarm

system and a six-speaker stereo with cassette player.

A '97 model equipped the same way will cost you about two percent more, says Mazda, although firm 1997 prices were not available as this was written. Aside from its new price, Mazda says the MX-6 will have just two changes for '97: It'll meet 1997 federal side-impact standards and have a formerly optional rear spoiler as standard equipment.

Missing from our tester: anti-lock brakes, available for \$500 in '96 LS models and \$950 in '96 base models. And, many of you will want to order automatic transmission, available for \$900 for '96.

We won't blame you for going the automatic route, even in a sporty car; we know how annoying a stick shift can get in heavy traffic, and we encountered plenty during our time with this MX-6. But if you're undecided, you'll find the MX-6's stick an excellent one, although it's coupled with a clutch that isn't the easiest to get used to.

If you can live with the mediocre mileage (no better than 26 mpg on the highway by EPA estimates), the V-6 is the engine of choice. It hauls this 2,800-pound car from a stop light with dispatch and, more important, does a great job of maintaining speed on long highway upgrades. It



sounds good, too, with a tone that is authoritative without being intrusive. Adding the automatic transmission to this version decreases mileage by 5 mpg in the city and 8 mpg on the highway, the EPA estimates.

The more budget-conscious can order the basic MX-6, which has a 2-liter, four-cylinder engine producing 118 horsepower. Both engines have four valves per cylinder, but the six runs best on premium unleaded, while the four can use the cheaper stuff.

Both engines and transmissions are built in Japan, although the MX-6 is assembled alongside the 626 and Ford Probe in the jointly owned Ford/Mazda plant in Flat Rock, Mich.

Helping make both versions of the MX-6 easy-handling is the standard variable-assist power steering, which is sensitive to engine speed. The ride is something else. While the fully

independent suspension does a good job of soaking up bumps, it and the tires produce a ride that was very harsh on wash-boarded pavement.

Besides the V-6 engine, the LS has wider tires on larger-diameter, 15-inch wheels; four-wheel disc brakes instead of a disc/drum system; fog lamps; air conditioning; mud guards; a leather-wrapped steering wheel and shift knob; and a better stereo. (A fancier "M" edition of the MX-6 was built for a time during the '96 model year.)

Overall, the interior is pretty typically Japanese in its appearance and functionality. We found the driver's seat shy on lower-back support—and lacking an adjustment for that—and this little problem on a short trip became a painful problem on a two-hour trip.

The seat fabric in our gold-outside/teal-inside tester was some of the ugliest stuff we've seen in a car in a long time.

plain and blah. Needs some contrast, badly.

The cupholder location is another minor annoyance: it's directly in front of the driver's dashboard air vent, blocking the air flow, of course, and forcing you to close the vent if you want to both use the air conditioning and have your coffee stay hot.

The trunk is fairly spacious for a sporty car, and storage space can be expanded by folding the rear seatbacks forward. Not so good is the high liftover to load the trunk and the relatively short opening, the latter a result of the sharply raked rear window.

Will that be changed for '98? Possibly. Or the MX-6 might be discontinued altogether, understandable in view of weak sales but still kind of a shame, depriving sporty-car shoppers of one more very appealing choice. ■

MOTOR SHOW

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The Acura 2.2cl is a car you can love or leave

By Tom Incantalupo
LA Times-Washington Post
News Service

ON ITS 10th anniversary, Honda's Acura division has introduced a model that will have a place in automotive history if not in your garage.

Its place in history: The first car with a Japanese luxury nameplate to be entirely designed, engineered and manufactured in the United States. Yes, we know, so is the larger and more expensive Toyota Avalon, but Toyota does not consider its Toyota models luxury cars.

The 2.2CL's place in your driveway will depend on whether you can get along any better than we did with the only engine available right now, a small four-cylinder that would work fine in Acura's cheaper and smaller Integra but that, for our money, doesn't quite cut it in this 3,000-pound car, especially considering its luxury billing.

The Integra, by the way, weighs 500 pounds less and comes with a four-cylinder engine offering almost the same horsepower—though 20 fewer pounds-feet of torque.

Our advice: Test drive before you buy and, if you agree with us but like the car, wait for the 3.0-liter V-6, set to be available in the fall, even though it'll probably cost you about \$4,000 more.

The emphasis here is decidedly on luxury. This is no sports car, but it's a terrific long-distance touring car.

If you regularly carry rear-seaters, you'll have to overlook a suspension that bounds and wallows annoyingly when that extra weight is aboard. If you normally carry only yourself and maybe a shotgun passenger, you'll be a lot happier with the suspension and probably will appreciate a very comfortable and very quiet ride.

In case Honda's luxury car division has lost you with its recent model name changes, here's a quick review:

The cheapest Acura is the Integra. Next comes the CL, whose letters stand for contemporary luxury. Then there

is the Vigor's replacements, the 2.5TL and 3.2TL, both sedans. Finally, there is the 3.5RL, which replaces the Legend.

The CL—with an 18-inch length advantage—is significantly larger than the two-door Integra. It officially went on sale in March as a '97 model and is intended to appeal, says the press release, to maturing baby boomers seeking stylish transportation at an affordable price.

The "transportation" and "affordable" elements are here, all right. As for stylish, well, the only adventurous element of its styling is the taillights. Otherwise, the look is quite generic.

The interior is equally uninspired aesthetically but at least it works pretty well, except for some annoyingly small and fussy climate controls.

One other gripe: No keyhole to the trunk. The lid can be released via the remote (if its battery hasn't run down) or with the lever next to the driver's seat.

Acura says the keyhole was left out to keep the car's hindquarters as stylistically clean as possible and also as an anti-theft measure. You can't punch out a trunk lock that isn't there.

Anyway, the trunk is quite spacious and so is the rear-seating area, with a good deal of legroom even for adults.

Both of the CL's engines will be built by Honda at its plant in Anna, Ohio. Both will have four valves per cylinder and Honda's "variable valve timing and lift electronic control," or VTEC, system, which Honda says provides more even torque at a greater range of engine speeds.

Both will use regular gas. Horsepower for the V-6, not yet announced, is expected to be about 200.

The 2.2-liter engine can be ordered with a four-speed automatic for \$800, but if you're one of the declining number of drivers who prefer to do their own shifting, we think you'll find a standard five-speed stick to your liking.

The six-cylinder CL will come with automatic transmission only.

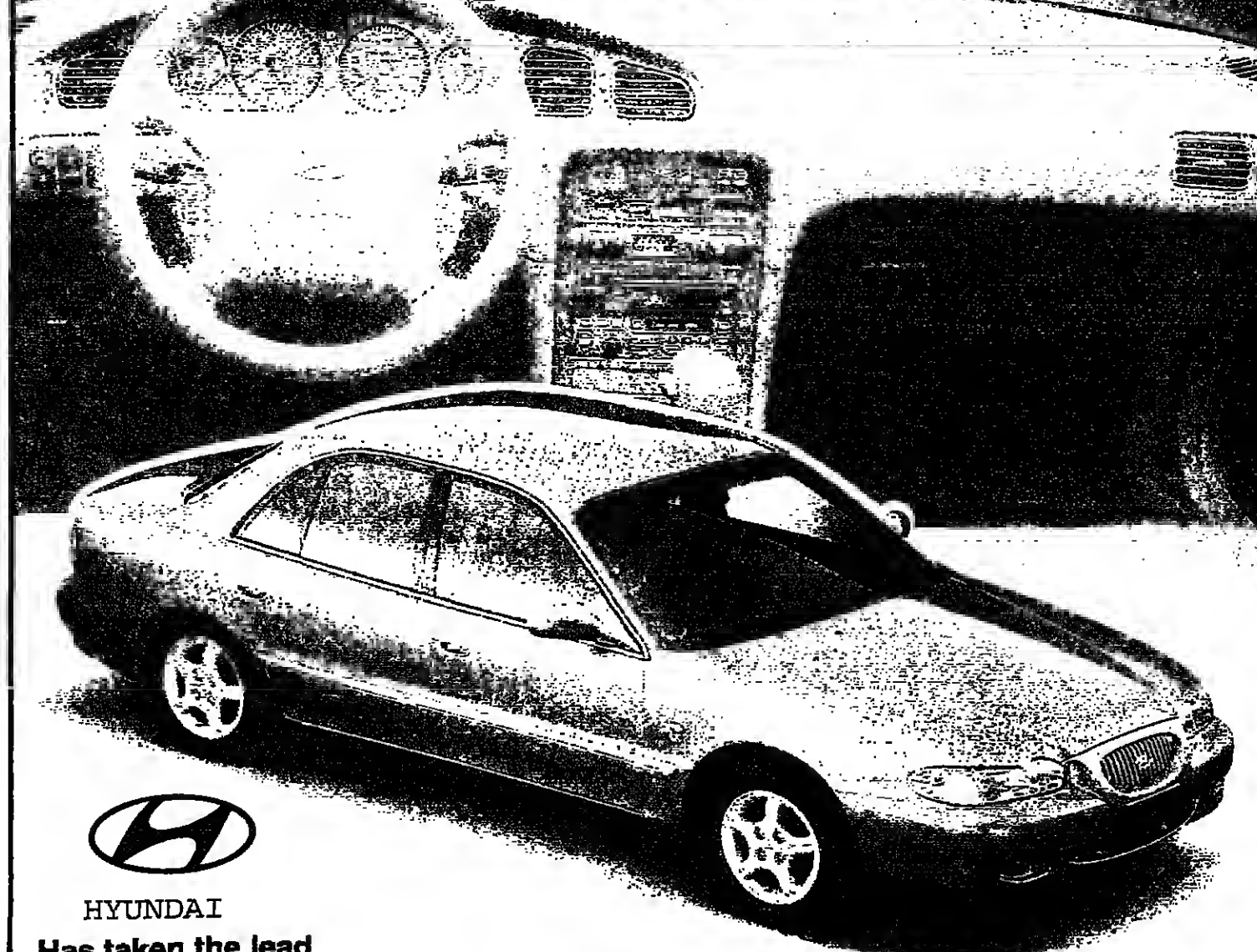
Standard in all versions will be antilock brakes, 205/55 tires on 16-inch cast aluminum alloy wheels, a power-operated driver's seat, a trunk pass-through to allow

long items to extend into the rear passenger area, a six-speaker stereo with in-dash compact disc player, automatic heat and air-conditioning system, height-adjustable steering wheel, cruise control, power windows and locks, power

moonroof and keyless entry.

A "premium package" that will be available either with the four- or six-cylinder engines includes leather on the seats and door panels and a couple of other odds and ends. ■

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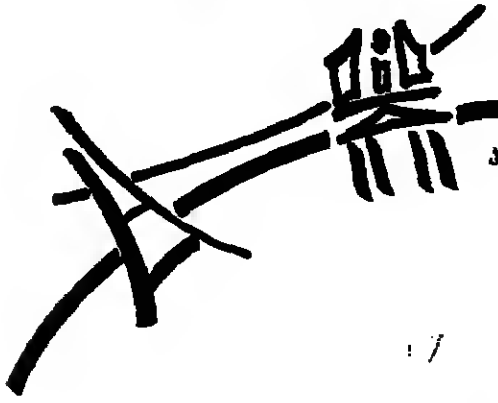
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Jacques Chirac en Jordanie

A l'occasion de la venue du président français Jacques Chirac en Jordanie les 23 et 24 octobre, le Jourdain, section en français du Star, publie un supplément spécial.



Jacques Chirac en Jordanie

La difficile mission du président Chirac

Le président Jacques Chirac entamera samedi une tournée au Proche-Orient qui l'amènera les 23 et 24 octobre en Jordanie. Il effectuera ainsi sa première visite officielle dans le royaume hachémite. Une visite qui doit permettre au président Chirac d'asseoir le rôle politique de la France dans le monde arabe. Une mission qui, selon différents responsables jordaniens, s'avère des plus difficiles.

24 heures en Jordanie

La tournée au Proche-Orient qui amènera Jacques Chirac les 23 et 24 octobre à Amman a des allures de marathon. En six jours, le président français se rendra en Syrie, en Israël, dans les territoires occupés, en Jordanie, au Liban puis en Égypte. Son arrivée à Amman est prévue mercredi soir, ainsi que sa première rencontre avec le roi Hussein. Le lendemain, il prononcera un discours devant les députés et sénateurs jordaniens, avant de donner une conférence de presse au palais royal en compagnie du souverain hachémite. Il s'envolera ensuite dans l'après-midi pour le Liban.

Comme l'ensemble de sa tournée au Proche-Orient, cette visite de 24 heures en Jordanie sera essentiellement politique et consacrée au rôle que jouent la France et l'Union européenne dans le processus de paix.

Les relations bilatérales entre la France et la Jordanie seront tout de même évoquées. Par le président Chirac, tout d'abord, qui tiendra faire un certain nombre de gestes pour renforcer ces relations, mais aussi par les ministres et différentes personnalités qui l'accompagneront au cours de cette visite.

Les discussions tourneront autour de deux axes essentiels. D'une part la culture, avec le statut de la langue française en Jordanie et notamment dans l'enseignement secondaire, et le renforcement de l'actuelle coopération dans le domaine de la radio et de la télévision. Et d'autre part l'économie, avec la signature d'un protocole financier entre les deux pays définissant un certain nombre de projets que la France est prête à soutenir. Un dossier auquel s'intéressera particulièrement Yves Galland, ministre de l'Industrie, qui accompagnera Jacques Chirac, tout comme Hervé de Charette, ministre des Affaires étrangères, et Hervé Gaymard, secrétaire d'État à la Santé et à la Sécurité sociale. Environ 180 personnes devraient accompagner cette visite du président Chirac, dont une centaine de journalistes.

SELON MOI

Depuis son arrivée à l'Élysée, le président Jacques Chirac semble être déterminé à assurer le retour de la France sur la scène du Moyen-Orient. En effet, pendant de longues années la France était considérée par la majorité des habitants de la région comme une véritable idole qui jouait ici à guichets fermés. Au fil des années, les fans ressentent progressivement que leur vedette s'engageait dans des rôles de plus en plus décevants, voire indignes de sa grandeur, et qu'ils n'étaient pas franchement récompensés de leur amour et leur fidélité. Alors, pleins d'amertume, les Arabes ont entonné cette belle aventure.

Après presque quinze longues années d'absence, la même star refait surface, les rides au front, les cheveux blanchis et la démarche hésitante. Elle cherche à nouveau à séduire et à obtenir la confiance perdue des ses anciens amis.

Si la majorité ne cache pas sa joie de ces retrouvailles, d'autres «prudents» affichent une certaine réserve et veulent lire entre les lignes du nouveau scénario avant d'applaudir.

En partant du principe que Jacques Chirac a grandi dans les jardins d'une école fondée sur les principes du droit et de la justice et qu'il est l'un des héritiers du fondateur de cette cinquième République qui n'a cessé de mener une lutte acharnée pour faire une France indépendante, digne et respectable, on ne peut que se réjouir des intentions du nouveau président. Et si on réfléchit au fait que Jacques Chirac a été l'adversaire redoutable puis le successeur de l'un des plus grands défenseurs de la cause d'Israël, on comprend plus aisément la volonté de M. Chirac de corriger les calculs erronés et les prises de position impulsives de son prédécesseur.

Quelques minutes après l'annonce de sa victoire aux élections présidentielles de mai 1995, M. Chirac a déclaré que la France redevenait le phare de tous les peuples et que les droits de l'Homme rayonneraient dans le monde entier. Ceci démontre quel point il était conscient de la décadence de la politique extérieure de la France et de la disparition de son pays, en tant que force politique et morale, de la majeure partie des conflits mondiaux.

Plus précisément encore, le président Chirac sait que dans ce coin maudit de la planète règne une injustice insupportable et que le «one man show» américain ne fait que prolonger le désordre actuel et augmenter les haines entre les peuples en conflit.

Croire que la mission de M. Chirac est simple serait une grave erreur. Pour réussir son pari, il doit prendre en considération les susceptibilités et les intérêts de toutes les forces en présence, car comme le disait La Rochefoucauld, «les querelles ne durent pas longtemps si le tort n'était que d'un côté». C'est là que réside l'une des difficultés que M. Chirac aura à surmonter, car Israël refuse toujours la moindre présence française dans les compromis régionaux. Les Américains, maîtres incontestés de la région, ne sont pas prêts à laisser la France menacer leur emprise sur la quasi-totalité des pouvoirs économiques et politiques du Moyen-Orient.

M. Chirac doit aussi convaincre l'opinion publique de son propre pays qui a longtemps été manipulée par un puissant lobby et des médias anti-arabes, ainsi que persuader certains de ses alliés européens. Pour ceci, il ne peut que profiter de la politique arrogante de M. Netanyahu qui a réussi à modifier les préjugés des Français.

Du côté arabe, les difficultés ne sont pas moindres. D'une part, il n'existe pas une seule politique arabe mais plusieurs, et d'autre part, les dirigeants arabes sont-ils franchement ravis de changer de partenaire? M. Chirac connaît la réponse. Mais il essaie probablement de profiter du mécontentement de certains d'entre eux, las de supporter l'humiliation que l'ami américain leur inflige épisodiquement. Quelques dirigeants arabes ayant le cœur tourné vers le côté américain de l'Atlantique, donnent l'impression de faire de l'oeil au président français, non pour le conquérir, mais plutôt pour le rendre jaloux et attendre son rival.

Les peuples arabes ont le sentiment profond que l'arbitre imposé au conflit n'est pas neutre et manque de crédibilité et que toutes ses promesses sont vaines. Les Arabes sont très susceptibles, mais ils ont la mémoire courte et le pardon facile. Ils ont le sentiment d'avoir été trahis par l'ami français qui s'est engagé sans réserve derrière les Américains et contre les intérêts arabes durant deux septennats socialistes.

Les poignées de main et les accolades ne peuvent pas couvrir de succès la campagne de l'Orient de M. Chirac si à quelques pas de sa tournée des milliers d'enfants irakiens continuent de périr par la faute d'une injustice sans précédent. La conquête du Moyen-Orient doit obligatoirement passer par une prédominance des enjeux humanitaires sur les politiques primaires qui laissent la France dans la course aux contrats loin derrière ceux qui ont commis le désastre.

La deuxième porte par laquelle la France peut se trouver un accès dans la région est un vide culturel et intellectuel total. C'est celle de la culture. En réussissant à diffuser correctement la culture auprès des nouvelles générations, elle peut espérer que l'avenir finisse par l'emporter sur l'islam.

La mission de M. Chirac est difficile mais pas impossible. Lutter pour un monde juste et humain et sans l'hégémonie d'une seule force sur les destins des peuples mérite, en tout cas, encouragement et respect.

Soudali Al Swais

La visite du président Chirac en Jordanie les 23 et 24 octobre prochains ne sera pas une tâche facile. Le chef de l'Etat français, qui arrive avec de grandes espérances afin de restaurer la détermination et les prises de position chaleureuses de la politique arabe du général de Gaulle, sera probablement étonné, voire déçu, de constater que les Jordaniens manquent d'enthousiasme.

Après avoir perdu l'espoir d'une médiation française équilibrée et juste ces dernières années, les Jordaniens n'ont pas dans les rues pour saluer le président français comme ce fut le cas auparavant. Ils ne seront pas non plus impatients de suivre son discours retransmis à la télévision.

Les Arabes, et les Jordaniens en particulier, ont depuis longtemps, et surtout depuis la guerre du Golfe pendant laquelle la position française ne s'est pratiquement pas différenciée, perdu l'espoir de retrouver dans la France l'ancien ami ou le protecteur préféré. En fait, il est plutôt difficile pour les Arabes de croire qu'une médiation française équilibrée puisse voir le jour dans la région.

C'est difficile, mais ce n'est cependant pas impossible.

«Nous souhaitons naturellement un rôle accru de la France et de l'Europe», explique le prince héritier Hassan en faisant allusion aux récentes prises de position européennes. Écartant toute ambiguïté en ce qui concerne le rôle de l'Europe, il ajoute: «Une médiation européenne et française en particulier (dans le processus de paix) est bien sûr importante. Elle serait soutenue par la Jordanie». Et le prince Hassan de déclarer sans aucune hésitation: «C'est le bon moment (pour la France et l'Europe) pour agir».

Depuis l'arrivée du gaulliste Jacques Chirac au pouvoir en mai 1995, la France n'a perdu aucune occasion pour faire en-

tendre sa nouvelle politique arabe. De discours que Jacques Chirac a prononcé au mois d'avril dernier à l'université du Caire à clairement montré que la France ne se contentera plus d'être en marge des affaires arabes, comme c'était le cas lors de la guerre du Golfe ou de la conférence de Madrid. En moins de deux mois, Jacques Chirac a reçu des dirigeants d'Arabie Saoudite, d'Égypte, du Koweït, du Qatar, des Émirats arabes unis, de Syrie, de Jordanie sans oublier le président de l'Autorité nationale palestinienne. Et la détermination du chef de l'Etat français à appliquer une nouvelle politique arabe l'a déjà amené à se rendre dans une dizaine de pays arabes.

Lors d'une tournée dans la région au mois de juillet dernier, Hervé de Charette, ministre des Affaires étrangères, a lui aussi rappelé la volonté de la France de jouer un rôle majeur au Proche-Orient. Et la prochaine tournée arabe du président Chirac, qui inclut outre la Jordanie, la Syrie, le Liban, l'Égypte, les territoires occupés et Israël, confirme cette volonté française de jouer désormais un rôle plus actif. Il se s'agit plus de paroles mais d'action.

«Le message (de cette visite) est un message de paix», commente Bernard Bajelet, ambassadeur de France en Jordanie. «Mais pas n'importe quelle paix. Nous nous intéressons à une paix juste qui repose sur certains principes que l'Europe est prête à appuyer».

Plus la visite du président Chirac approche et plus l'enthousiasme des responsables jordaniens à accueillir un rôle français dans la région, ainsi que dans le processus de paix israélo-palestinien, augmente. Selon Marwan Mouasher, ministre de l'Information, la position européenne a récemment radicalement changé. Des pays qui ont toujours soutenu

Israël ont soudainement commencé à défendre les intérêts palestiniens. «Et nous en Jordanie, nous soutenons complètement ce rôle politique européen» ajoute le ministre, ancien ambassadeur jordanien en Israël.

Un soutien financier nécessaire

Les responsables jordaniens ne cachent néanmoins pas leurs inquiétudes. «On est de tout cœur avec les Européens» déclare un haut responsable jordanien. «Mais il ne faut pas oublier qu'il y a des sensibilités américaines».

Sharif Fawaz Sharaf, ambassadeur jordanien en France, estime pour sa part que la politique française dans la région «est liée à plusieurs facteurs d'ordre politique, économique ou autres», estimant qu'il est difficile de dire si «la politique d'une grande puissance va être efficace ou non».

La France est consciente que de nombreux obstacles peuvent freiner son ambition, et notamment la position des États-Unis à l'égard d'un rôle européen accru. Mais selon Bernard Bajelet, une médiation française ou européenne dans le processus de paix n'est pas une revendication. C'est une demande exprimée par les acteurs de la région, et surtout les Palestiniens. «Nous ne souhaitons pas que les États-Unis se désengagent. Mais il faut bien observer le système mondial depuis l'effondrement de l'Union soviétique. Ses tendances isolationnistes inquiètent les Européens».

Jusqu'à présent, le rôle de la France, et de l'Europe dans le processus de paix s'est surtout limité à un soutien financier. L'aide économique de la France à la Jordanie pour cette année, s'élève à 400 millions de francs, auxquels s'ajoutent 130 millions de francs versés à l'Union européenne pour l'aide destinée à la Jordanie. Quant



Durant sa tournée au Proche-Orient du 19 au 25 octobre, Jacques Chirac tentera de jouer un rôle de médiateur au nom de la France et de l'Union européenne.

aux territoires palestiniens, la France assume la quasi-totalité de l'aide financière à la reconstruction en Palestine.

«C'est vrai», constate Mu'assem Bilbissi, ancien ambassadeur de France en Jordanie. «Alors que la France a poussé pour que l'aide technique et économique envers les

pays arabes augmente, elle n'en a pas retiré grand chose». Pour lui, une plainte générale contre l'hégémonie et la domination des États-Unis, et d'Israël s'est faite entendre lors du sommet économique d'Amman l'année dernière. Une situation qui n'est pas nouvelle. Alors que la France a

regroupé ses forces avec celles des États-Unis pendant la guerre du Golfe, elle s'est ensuite retrouvée exclue lors du partage du gâteau économique.

La France et l'Europe se sont ainsi vues isolées et écartées d'une participation efficace dans le processus de paix, un élément décisif dans l'équilibre du pouvoir international. Et toute remise en question de cette situation aujourd'hui ne semble pas être très appréciée. Le secrétaire d'État américain Warren Christopher a déjà émis à plusieurs reprises des réserves à l'encontre du rôle politique que souhaite jouer l'Union européenne dans la région, estimant qu'il est préférable qu'elle se limite à des activités économiques.

Pour M. Bajelet, la France est tout à fait prête à continuer à assumer ce rôle de médiateur. Un rôle qui reste primordial pour les pays de la région qui assistent à une diminution de l'aide américaine. Mais il ne doit pas être limitatif.

Il est donc difficile de savoir si avec cette tournée au Moyen-Orient, le président Jacques Chirac réussira à préparer le terrain pour permettre au rôle de la France de se développer. Ce qui est sûr, c'est que Jacques Chirac, que deux échecs aux élections présidentielles n'ont pas empêché de se représenter une troisième fois pour enfin se faire élire, est un homme déterminé.

Sa'eda Kilani



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Jacques Chirac en Jordanie

A l'occasion de la venue du président français Jacques Chirac en Jordanie les 23 et 24 octobre, le Jourdain, section en français du Star, publie un supplément spécial.

Interview

«Un nouvel esprit dans la politique française»

Pour Sharif Fawaz Sharaf, ambassadeur de Jordanie en France, la visite du président Jacques Chirac en Jordanie va marquer le début de nouvelles relations entre la France et le royaume hachémite.

Ambassadeur de Jordanie en France, Sharif Fawaz Sharaf occupe les fonctions d'Ambassadeur de Jordanie en France depuis environ un an et demi. Auparavant, il a exercé cette fonction aux Etats-Unis, en Allemagne, en Suède, en Norvège et au Danemark.

De 1990 à 1995, il était ambassadeur permanent de la Jordanie auprès des Nations-Unies à Genève.

La visite de Jacques Chirac marque-t-elle le début de nouvelles relations entre la France et la Jordanie?

Les relations franco-jordanaises jouissent d'une longue tradition de coopération et d'amitié. Et la visite du président Jacques Chirac est d'une part une occasion pour renforcer et resserrer ces liens existants entre les deux pays, et d'autre part, elle constitue le début d'une ère nouvelle dans les relations entre les deux pays. Le fondement de cette ère est le changement qui s'opère dans la politique française vis-à-vis de la région avec le retour de l'esprit de la politique de Charles de Gaulle par rapport au monde arabe en général, et la Jordanie en particulier.

Avez-vous l'impression que la France porte un intérêt grandissant au monde arabe depuis l'arrivée de Jacques Chirac?

L'arrivée du président Chirac

constitue une approche nouvelle dans la politique étrangère. Celle-ci porte en effet un intérêt particulier à la région et au monde arabe. Sans parler des amitiés et du crédit personnel du président Chirac dans le monde arabe et sans énumérer ses déclarations respectives. Je crois que tous les observateurs qui s'intéressent à la région ont le sentiment qu'un nouvel esprit anime la politique arabe de la France.

Pensez-vous que cette nouvelle politique française envers les pays arabes puisse se révéler efficace dans la région? Et si oui, est-ce que la Jordanie est prête à accepter un rôle accru de la France dans la région?

Il est difficile de dire si la politique d'une grande puissance va être efficace ou non dans la région. Elle est liée à plusieurs facteurs d'ordre politique, économique ou autres. Mais il est évident que la France et l'Europe jouent un rôle primordial dans le domaine économique, un rôle qui jusqu'à maintenant est de loin plus grand que leur présence dans le domaine politique. Ajoutons également la position des différentes parties concernées dans la région et leur souhait de voir l'Europe en général et la France en particulier jouer un rôle éminent dans la région.

Pensez-vous que, pour la Jordanie, cette aspiration soit

compatible avec l'action diplomatique américaine et que le Moyen-Orient souhaite une plus grande présence de la France dans la région?

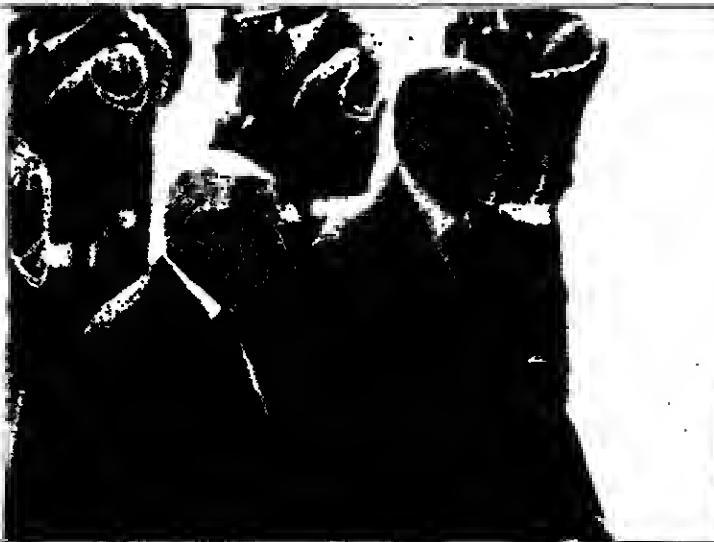
Il est nullement question de distribuer des points de bonne conduite pour l'un ou l'autre pays ou de considérer que l'action de la France entre en compétition avec l'action diplomatique américaine.

La France a des relations historiques et des intérêts avec tous les pays de la région. Idem pour les Etats-Unis d'Amérique. La possibilité est donc pleinement ouverte à la France, aux Etats-Unis et à l'Europe de participer à la stabilité et au progrès dans la région. Les relations entre la Jordanie et ces deux pays sont excellentes. De même pour les pays arabes. Et personne ne peut nier le rôle de la France et de l'Europe dans la Méditerranée et le monde arabe. C'est dans ce sens que la Jordanie veille à renforcer ses liens avec tous les pays. Les Etats-Unis, la France, l'Allemagne, la Grande-Bretagne, la Russie, etc...

Je crois que l'évolution des événements dans la région oblige les uns et les autres à s'unir et à intensifier leurs efforts pour surmonter les obstacles et faire sortir la région de l'impasse.

Pensez-vous que la France puisse profiter de cette visite présidentielle pour mieux se faire connaître aux yeux des Français?

Le peuple français, héritier de la culture encyclopédique,



Jacques Chirac accueilli par le président Elias Hraoui lors de sa dernière visite officielle au Liban au mois d'avril.

cherche toujours à connaître les civilisations, les cultures et les langues du monde. L'intérêt que porte d'ailleurs la France au monde est sans égal. Elle accueille l'Institut du monde arabe, une institution unique en son genre en Europe, qui permet aux Français de bien connaître les pays de l'autre rive de la Méditerranée.

Evidemment, on déploie des efforts pour qu'il y ait en France des manifestations qui feront connaître aux Français la Jordanie et sa richesse archéologique, artistique et culturelle.

Propos recueillis par Sa'eda Kilani et Olivier Bras

Economie

L'Union a le vent en poupe

La visite de M. Chirac correspond avec un changement d'attitude de la Jordanie à l'égard de l'Union européenne en général et de la France en particulier.

L'émergence, lente mais sûrement, d'une nouvelle politique européenne envers le Moyen-Orient peut représenter un grand pas en avant pour les économies de la région. Des changements s'imposent dans la conjoncture actuelle, et en particulier en ce qui concerne l'Irak. Cet embargo continue à laisser un large vide dans l'économie du Moyen-Orient. Mais les Libanais, les Jordaniens et les Palestiniens, entre autres, peuvent espérer profiter d'un affaiblissement de la position américaine dans la région au profit de l'Union européenne.

Il ne faut bien sûr pas oublier le rôle important que joue déjà l'UE dans la région. Mais, dans le cadre d'une vraie paix, et non celle inspirée par les Américains qui ne sert même plus les intérêts israéliens, la région peut envisager une nouvelle ère de rapprochement économique avec l'Europe.

Le processus a bien sûr déjà commencé, voilà onze mois à Barcelone. L'ouverture initiée peut aider les économies régionales à se transformer. En ce qui concerne la Jordanie, cette adaptation prendra encore un peu de temps. L'établissement d'une zone de libre échange entre le royaume hachémite et l'Union européenne étant prévu pour 2010. Mais pour cela, il reste à changer la mentalité des Jordaniens qui ne voient leur salut que dans la domination américaine de la région.

La visite du président français Jacques Chirac entre

dans le cadre d'une telle évolution. M. Chirac, comme la plupart de ses homologues européens, ne cesse de rappeler le rôle majeur que peut jouer l'Europe dans la région. Il a à maintes reprises rappelé que les Européens sont prêts à s'engager financièrement et politiquement. Le fait que la Jordanie ait signé la paix avec Israël fait en effet de ce pays un pilier de stabilité dans la région qu'il convient de soutenir.

Une nouvelle stratégie

La Jordanie a nettement vu ces dernières années ses échanges avec l'Union européenne augmenter. C'est d'ailleurs avec ce partenaire que la Jordanie réalise la grande majorité de ses importations et exportations, comme le montre le tableau ci-dessous.

Occupant une position respectable par rapport à ses partenaires européens, la France

continue de développer régulièrement ses activités en Jordanie. Elle vient d'ailleurs de signer un contrat avec le Marché financier d'Amman, la bourse jordanienne, afin de procéder à sa modernisation.

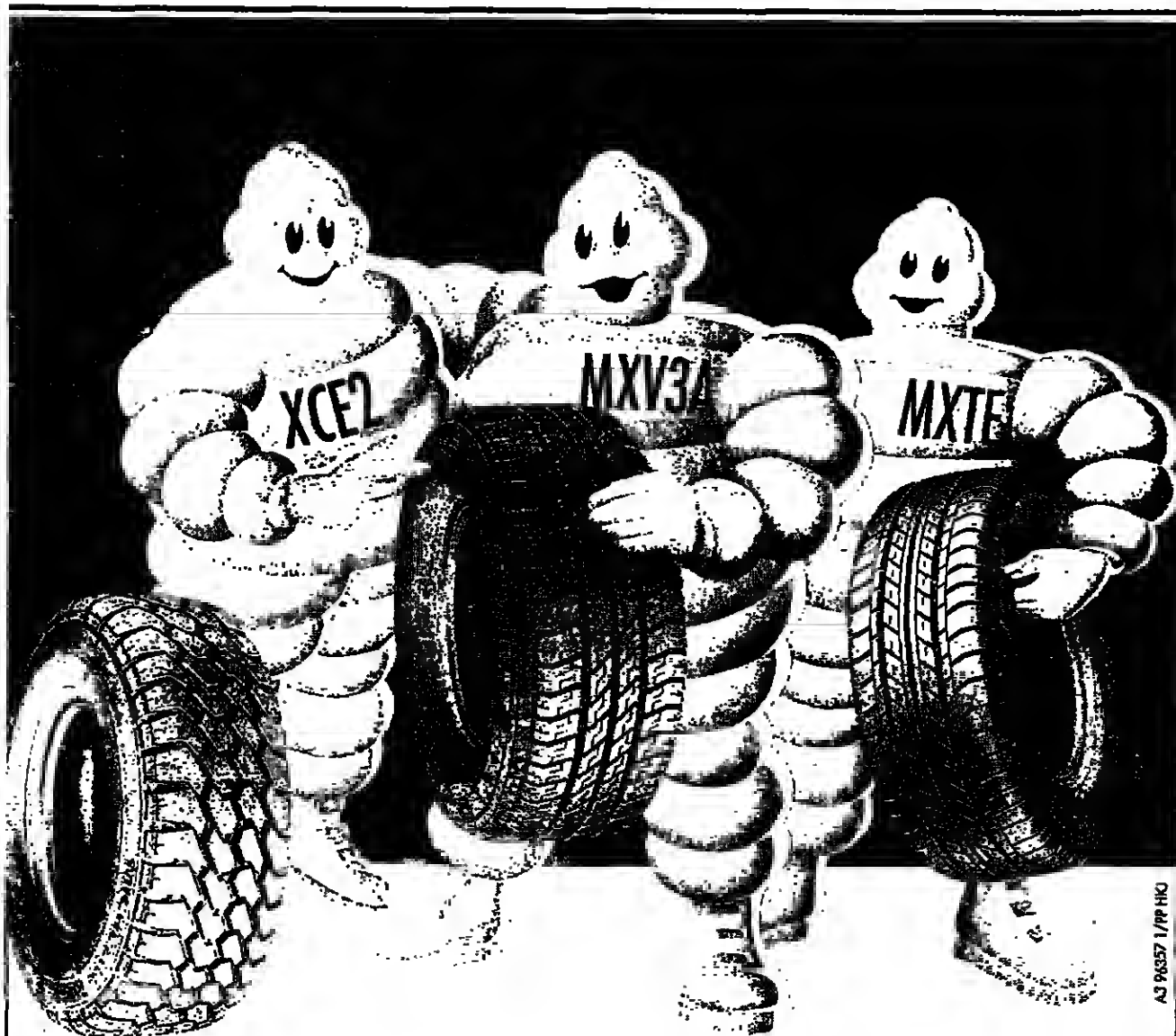
Pour poursuivre la modernisation et l'adaptation de son économie toute entière, la Jordanie doit donc miser sur un renforcement de ses liens avec l'Union européenne. La nécessité de démanteler une coopération était un des thèmes-clés de Barcelone.

La visite de M. Chirac souligne aujourd'hui cette idée. L'adoption d'une stratégie économique plus dynamique par les Européens, et la France en particulier, ne peut être que profitable pour la Jordanie et ses voisins arabes.

Riad al Khouri
MEBA S.A.R.L.

Commerce extérieur de la Jordanie en 1995-1996 (millions de dinars)

	1995		1996	
	IMP	EXP	IMP	EXP
Etats Unis	241	15	186	7
Japon	91	13	65	7
Union Europ.	859	63	485	46
dont la France	119	4	81	1
Monde	2590	1085	1559	463



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à L'occasion de sa première visite officielle en Jordanie

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Analyse

Une place à prendre maintenant

Pour les experts politiques jordaniens, la France et l'Union européenne bénéficient actuellement de conditions favorables pour jouer un plus grand rôle dans le processus de paix au Proche-Orient.

Partagés entre pessimisme et optimisme, les experts politiques jordaniens expriment des sentiments mitigés envers la nouvelle politique arabe de la France et celle de l'Europe. Mais tous s'accordent pour dire que le moment est venu pour que l'Europe reprenne sa place dans la région. «Nous attendons des résultats positifs aux niveaux politique et économique pour la première visite de Jacques Chirac en tant que président français», déclare Munir Hamameh, expert économique. Ghassam El Jundi, directeur du département de recherche à l'Institut de Diplomatie d'Amman, juge la visite de Chirac nécessaire afin de «continuer à renforcer les relations entre la Jordanie et la France. Cette visite va permettre de mettre l'accent sur les relations avec la France gaulliste d'aujourd'hui».

Selon Ghassam El Jundi, Jacques Chirac est un homme politique vaillant aux allures gaullistes qui réalisera ses objectifs en refusant de se plier à la politique américaine, contrairement à son prédécesseur François Mitterrand qui «était pas un bon diplomate. François Mitterrand était peut-être bon en littérature, ou en architecture, mais pas en politique».

Selon les différents schémas politiques, «le pouvoir socialiste est celui qui doit soutenir les mouvements de libération. Or, en France, la situation était inversée», explique Thibab Makhadmeh, professeur de science politique à l'Université de Jordanie.

La France peut profiter aujourd'hui d'une nouvelle situation politique régionale pour retrouver une place importante au Proche-Orient. Selon de nombreux observateurs, cela n'était pas possible voilà quelques années.

«Dans l'avenir, les Etats-Unis ne seront plus la seule grande puissance dans le monde. Les deux puissances ambitieuses, le Japon et la Communauté euro-

péenne vont certainement réussir à s'imposer sur la scène internationale», prédit Thibab Makhadmeh. «Par exemple, la communauté européenne a réussi à contenir le conflit en exerçant une pression sur les Etats-Unis lors de la dernière attaque américaine contre l'Irak en septembre dernier».

Cependant, Ghassam El Jundi n'imagine pas l'Union européenne comme un bloc politique se dotant d'une réelle politique étrangère. «Il y a une coordination parmi les pays membres mais ils ne sont pas capables de s'accorder sur une politique», souligne Ghassam El Jundi. «La guerre en Bosnie en a été la preuve».

Ghassam El Jundi souligne que le Proche-Orient doit être une priorité dans la politique européenne en raison de sa profonde connaissance de la région.

Sur l'échiquier politique mondial, elle doit réussir à jouer un rôle de médiateur. «Les Etats-Unis ne sont pas un arbitre impartial», regrette Ghassam El Jundi. «La France a par contre su jouer un rôle de médiateur lors des derniers conflits au Sud-Liban et en Irak».

Les spécialistes ajoutent aussi que la détérioration récente du processus de paix au Proche-Orient est un élément essentiel qui pousse les Arabes à se tourner vers un partenaire plus impartial. «L'Europe doit pousser pour prendre une place dans le processus de paix», commente El Jundi. «Surtout après avoir été éliminée des négociations de Madrid».

Le rôle de médiateur dans les conflits du Proche-Orient est aujourd'hui celui que tout le monde convoite.

Mais les Etats-Unis ne se sont pas prêts à perdre cette fonction et, selon Thibab Makhadmeh, la partie s'annonce dure. «Le message envoyé pendant l'attaque israélienne au Liban qui a conduit au massa-



Hervé de Charette, ministre français des Affaires étrangères, après le bombardement de Cana au Liban. Une de Cana a été clair. Pour les Américains, la France doit rester à l'écart de la scène politique régionale. ■

Oroob el Abed

Une politique qui s'affirme

Lors de sa campagne présidentielle en 1995, le président Chirac déclarait: «notre pays doit retrouver un grand dessein dans le monde arabe et pour la Méditerranée». Un an plus tard, le nouveau président de la République définissait les grands axes de sa politique méditerranéenne et arabe lors d'un discours devant les étudiants de l'Université du Caire. «La politique arabe de la France doit être une dimension essentielle de sa politique étrangère. Je souhaite lui donner un élan nouveau, dans la fidélité aux orientations voulues par son initiateur, le général de Gaulle».

Deux axes ressortent clairement de ce discours: le soutien au processus de paix israélo-arabe et le partenariat euro-méditerranéen. «Un accord juste et équilibré doit être trouvé entre toutes les parties en cause sur le statut final des territoires palestiniens. Ceci sur la base du principe de l'échange de la terre contre la paix. Cette accord devra aussi porter sur les questions les plus difficiles, sur Jérusalem, sur la situation des réfugiés et sur l'avenir des implantations. Il n'y aura de paix durable que si on respecte le droit du peuple palestinien et ses aspirations légitimes à disposer d'un Etat».

Quelques jours après ce discours, le président Chirac avait l'occasion de donner corps à sa nouvelle politique arabe en tentant une médiation dans le conflit israélo-libanais. Des efforts diplomatiques qui ont amené à la signature d'un cessez-le-feu et la création d'un comité de surveillance de ce cessez-le-feu auquel participent notamment la France et les Etats-Unis.

Enfin, la récente offensive américaine contre l'Irak a permis à la France d'afficher sa différence face aux Américains dans le monde arabe. A l'inverse de l'Allemagne ou de la Grande-Bretagne qui ont soutenu la politique de Bill Clinton, la France a émis de sérieuses réserves contre l'intervention américaine. Une attitude qui a permis à la France de redorer son blason auprès de l'Irak et de ses voisins. ■

Portrait

Plus de trente ans de politique

La victoire de Jacques Chirac aux élections présidentielles du mois de mai 1995 représentait l'aboutissement d'une longue carrière politique débutée trente ans plus tôt.

En accédant à l'âge de 62 ans à la plus haute fonction politique française, Jacques Chirac récoltait les fruits d'une longue carrière politique. Celle-ci a débuté en 1962 au cabinet de Georges Pompidou, alors Premier ministre, où il occupait les fonctions de chargé de mission. Quelques années plus tard, Georges Pompidou décide d'envoyer ce jeune politicien dans un fief socialiste pour tenter d'obtenir son premier mandat de député. Jacques Chirac se retrouve candidat aux élections législatives de 1967 dans la circonscription d'Ussel, en Corrèze. Un département français situé à 500 kilomètres au sud de Paris dans lequel le président Chirac a passé toutes ses vacances de la fin de la guerre aux années 50. Depuis 1965, il occupait des fonctions de conseiller municipal dans le petit village corrézien de Sainte-Féol. Il remporte son premier mandat législatif sur une terre de gauche, celle d'Henri Queuille, ancien président du conseil de la IV^{ème} République.

Dans cette circonscription, le futur président s'est découvert un sens du contact exceptionnel. Il aime aller à la rencontre de ses électeurs qui sont en grande majorité des agriculteurs.

Après ce premier succès, il se voit offrir des fonctions de plus en plus importantes au niveau gouvernemental, secrétaire d'Etat aux Affaires sociales chargé des problèmes de

l'emploi de 1967 à 1968 puis secrétaire d'Etat à l'Economie et aux Finances de 1968 à 1971. Ses nouvelles responsabilités ne l'éloignent cependant pas du département où il a fait ses premières armes. De 1970 à 1979, il restera président du conseil général de la Corrèze et sera réélu député en 1973 sur cette circonscription.

Sept ans après son entrée en politique, Jacques Chirac se voit confier son premier portefeuille ministériel important, celui de l'Agriculture. Un ministère dans lequel il se sent particulièrement à l'aise grâce à son ancrage corrézien et sa connaissance du monde agricole. Deux ans après, en 1974, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, pour qui il a fait campagne lors des élections présidentielles, le choisit comme Premier Ministre. Il restera deux ans à Matignon avant de démissionner pour protester contre le projet de loi visant à taxer les plus-values. Un impôt que Chirac considère comme une provocation contre la France des possédants.

Très présent sur la scène internationale

Sept ans après, il retrouve Valéry Giscard d'Estaing aux présidentielles, mais cette fois dans le camp opposé. Elu maire de Paris en 1977, Jacques Chirac a pris entre-temps un important poids politique. Mais le candidat du RPR ne parvient pas à se faire élire et se voit ensuite reprocher l'élection de François Mitterrand qui a profité de la division de la droite.



La passation des pouvoirs le 17 mai 1995 entre François Mitterrand et Jacques Chirac.

Maire de Paris et député de Corrèze, Jacques Chirac doit attendre 1986 pour revenir à Matignon, la victoire de la droite aux élections législatives obligeant François Mitterrand à cohabiter avec lui. Les deux hommes s'affronteront deux ans plus tard aux élections présidentielles. Un duel qui tourne de nouveau à l'avantage de François Mitterrand.

Vainqueur des élections de 1995 avec 52,6% des suffrages contre le socialiste Lionel Jospin, Jacques Chirac a depuis placé le début de son septennat sous le signe de l'international. Quelques jours à peine après son arrivée au pouvoir, il dé-

clut, avec les Britanniques, la création de la Force de réaction rapide en Bosnie. Une initiative qui marquera un tournant dans cette guerre.

Très présent sur la scène internationale, Jacques Chirac s'est un peu éloigné des affaires intérieures françaises que son Premier ministre Alain Juppé est chargé de gérer.

Pendant près d'un an et demi, il n'a en effet eu de cesse de faire entendre la voix de la France dans le monde entier, cherchant ainsi à renouer avec l'idée gaullienne de la «grandeur de la France».

Olivier Bras

Communiqué publicitaire

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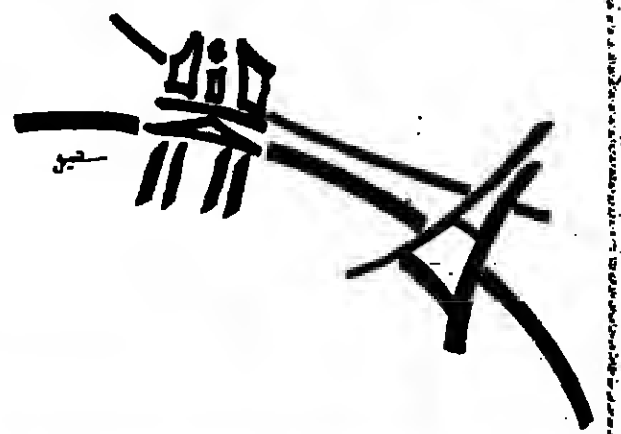
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Supplément

Jacques Chirac en Jordanie

A l'occasion de la venue du président français Jacques Chirac en Jordanie les 23 et 24 octobre, le Jourdain, section en français du Star, publie un supplément spécial.



Expositions

6 mois de Jordanie à Paris

Grâce à trois différentes expositions consacrées à la Jordanie, le royaume hachémite aura la vedette en France du mois de mars au mois d'octobre.

«L'objectif de cette manifestation, c'est de donner une image, la plus fidèle possible, de la Jordanie. On s'intéressera non seulement à l'archéologie, mais aussi à la science, à l'art et à l'artisanat», explique Denis Toupin, directeur du Centre culturel français.

L'idée d'une «saison jordanienne» à Paris est née au cours d'une rencontre entre la reine Nour et Madame Chirac, lorsque son mari était encore maire de la capitale française. Elle a ensuite été reprise par l'Ambassadeur de France à Amman, M. Bernard Bajolet.

Le projet comprend trois manifestations qui se tiendront toutes à Paris entre mars et octobre 1997.

La première intitulée «Voyage en Jordanie» se déroulera à l'Hôtel de Ville. Elle sera inaugurée le 11 mars par la reine Nour et Mme Chirac et durera jusqu'au 11 mai. Elle comprendra essentiellement des œuvres d'artistes contemporains, treize parmi les plus représentatifs du pays, avec pour ponctuer l'exposition, quelques pièces archéologiques, des costumes traditionnels jordanien, des tapis et autres objets artisanaux ainsi qu'une salle réservée à des photos de Pétra.

Un «salon de thé» construit spécialement par l'artiste Ali Jabri, symbolisera les vertus d'accueil et d'hospitalité qui font la réputation de la Jordanie.

Pour Widad Kavar, qui exposera un certain nombre de robes, tapis et bijoux anciens provenant de sa collection personnelle, «c'est une bonne occasion de faire connaître la culture jordanienne en France, en mêlant à la fois les traditions dont nous sommes fiers et des productions artistiques contemporaines. Le monde de vie jordanien dans son ensemble sera mis à l'honneur».

La deuxième manifestation aura lieu au grand magasin «Le Printemps», du 12 mars à la fin avril. Ce deuxième temps fort de la saison jordanienne permettra d'exposer sur 400 mètres carrés des objets artisanaux tels que des poteries, verreries, bijoux, tissus et autres produits traditionnels jordanien. Ces produits, achetés par Le Printemps, seront vendus au grand public. Ils proviendront des principales fabriques d'artisanat local, telles que Bani Hamida, la fondation Nour al Hussein, Jordan river design...

Promouvoir l'image de la Jordanie

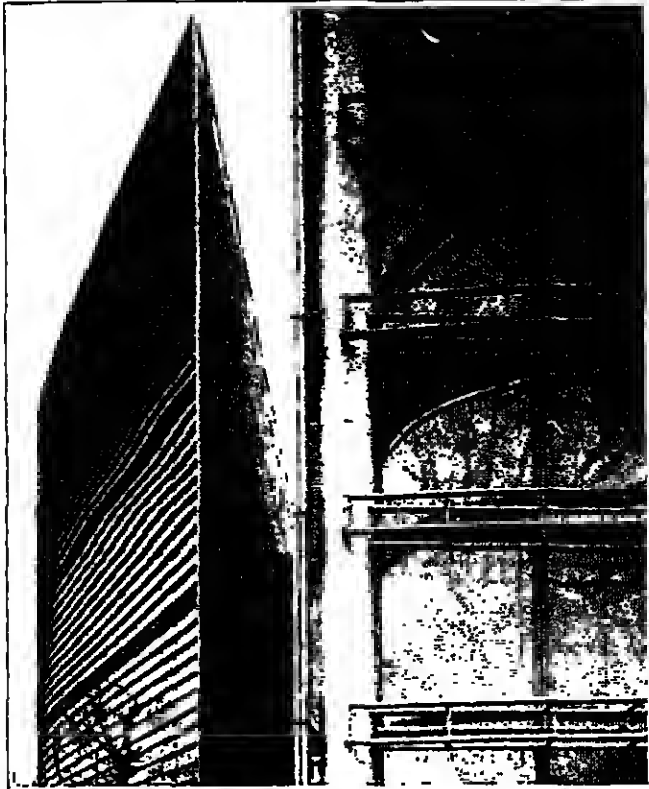
Le troisième axe de cette saison sera lui consacré à l'archéologie avec une exposition à l'Institut du monde arabe de la mi-juin à octobre. Elle permettra aux visiteurs de découvrir l'histoire de la Jordanie à travers ses sites majeurs, depuis la préhistoire (statues d'Ain Ghazal, Tell Abou Hamid) en passant par les royaumes moabite, edomite ou ammonite, les sites hellénistiques et nabatéens, la ville hellénistique de Jérash ou les sites byzantins et omeyyades. «En même temps, on montrera la technologie de l'archéologie, les nouveaux moyens de fouille et de restauration», explique Mme Jean-Van Rossum, attaché culturel à l'Ambassade de France.

Cette exposition organisée en collaboration avec la Jordanie et l'Italie, est soutenue par le mécénat technologique d'EDF. Certaines pièces restaurées par EDF (statues d'Ain Ghazal, rouleaux de Qumran) seront montrées pour la première fois. Cette exposition déménagera ensuite à Rome.

En marge de ces trois expositions se tiendront des conférences et des concerts de musique traditionnelle.

Un colloque organisé par le Centre d'études et de recherches sur le Moyen-Orient contemporain, avec notamment le Prince héritier Hassan, s'intéressera au demi-siècle d'indépendance de la Jordanie. Un colloque économique étudiera les opportunités qui existent pour les entreprises françaises désireuses d'investir en Jordanie.

Les retombées de la saison jordanienne seront donc multiples. Cette manifestation pro-



L'Institut du monde arabe à Paris

mouvra l'image de la Jordanie en France grâce à sa culture et ses traditions, et devrait contribuer à renforcer les liens économiques, et notamment touris-

tiques, existant entre les deux pays. ■

Mona Qaddoumi

«De nouvelles inspirations»

En 1983, Ammar Kham-mash faisait déjà partie des artistes jordanien exposés à Paris. Il explique sa joie de revenir l'année prochaine à Paris.

Que pensez-vous de cet échange artistique entre la Jordanie et la France? Je pense que d'une façon générale, l'art occidental a atteint ses limites et il donne aujourd'hui une chance aux pays en voie de développement pour découvrir leurs créations. Le centre de gravité de l'art moderne s'est déplacé de Paris à New-York et l'Europe se rend compte que le moment est venu de chercher de nouvelles sources d'inspiration.

L'Europe s'était longtemps tournée vers l'Extrême-Orient, négligeant le Proche-Orient et sa civilisation qui, autrefois pourtant, avait irrigué la civilisation gréco-latine. Il est temps que le Proche-Orient retrouve sa place dans la conscience européenne. Par rapport au niveau artistique de l'Europe, l'art jordanien est encore à un niveau enfantin.

Mais il est en train de découvrir ses possibilités.

Considérez-vous de la même façon l'art en France et en Jordanie?

Chez nous, les médias s'orientent surtout vers la politique, comme si l'art n'existait pas. Les Français, eux, s'intéressent à la fois à la politique et à la culture. Ils ont de plus un grand intérêt pour le monde arabe. Le Centre culturel français, par exemple, est le centre étranger le plus dynamique à Amman. Ces cinq dernières années, le développement de l'art contemporain en Jordanie était fortement lié au CCF, dont les expositions, à mon avis, étaient plus importantes que celle du musée national. Il a grandement ouvert ses portes au public, reflétant ainsi une conception démocratique de la culture. A notre tour de rembourser notre dette en exposant nos œuvres devant un large public français. ■

Propos recueillis par Mona Qaddoumi

Portrait

Les portes s'ouvrent pour Ghada Dahdaleh

Ghada Dahdaleh fait partie des artistes qui seront exposés le printemps prochain à Paris. Certaines de ses œuvres sont actuellement présentées au Centre culturel français d'Amman. Visite guidée de cette exposition.

A voir son physique, sa finesse et son sourire, on ne se doute pas de la force et du sérieux que Ghada Dahdaleh exprime dans ses peintures.

Jeune peintre jordanienne, épouse et mère de famille, elle passe son temps à improviser des formes simples sur papier. Les recouvrir de couleurs aux tonalités diverses et y ajouter quelques rythmes chatoyants pour finalement créer un équilibre de maître.

Ses formes géométriques, bien que simples, ne sont jamais rigides, même lorsqu'une forme carrée se pose au milieu d'une autre. Car cette jeune artiste s'appuie sur une grande variété de surfaces: quelques unes rugueuses, rustiques et informelles ou lisses et solides, ou même transparentes et éphémères.

Les lignes encadrant les formes ne sont presque jamais raides afin d'offrir une grande liberté.

Juxtaposés au dessus de ces formes, des gribouillages au crayon, des taches d'encre ou de peinture, des effets de pulvérisation, des détails familiers sur les murs des anciens quartiers du pays et surtout dans les camps de réfugiés. Ils marquent le passage du temps et l'empreinte faite volontairement ou par hasard sur le mur.

Les papiers faits mains ajoutent au caractère rustique de ses œuvres. La surface de la toile ne représente plus une trame uniforme mais elle est parcourue de griffures et de rides. Ce sont leurs surfaces rugueuses, décrépies, aux bords déchirés,

qui ajoutent à la symbolique du sujet qui est à la source des œuvres de Ghada Dahdaleh, les camps palestiniens.

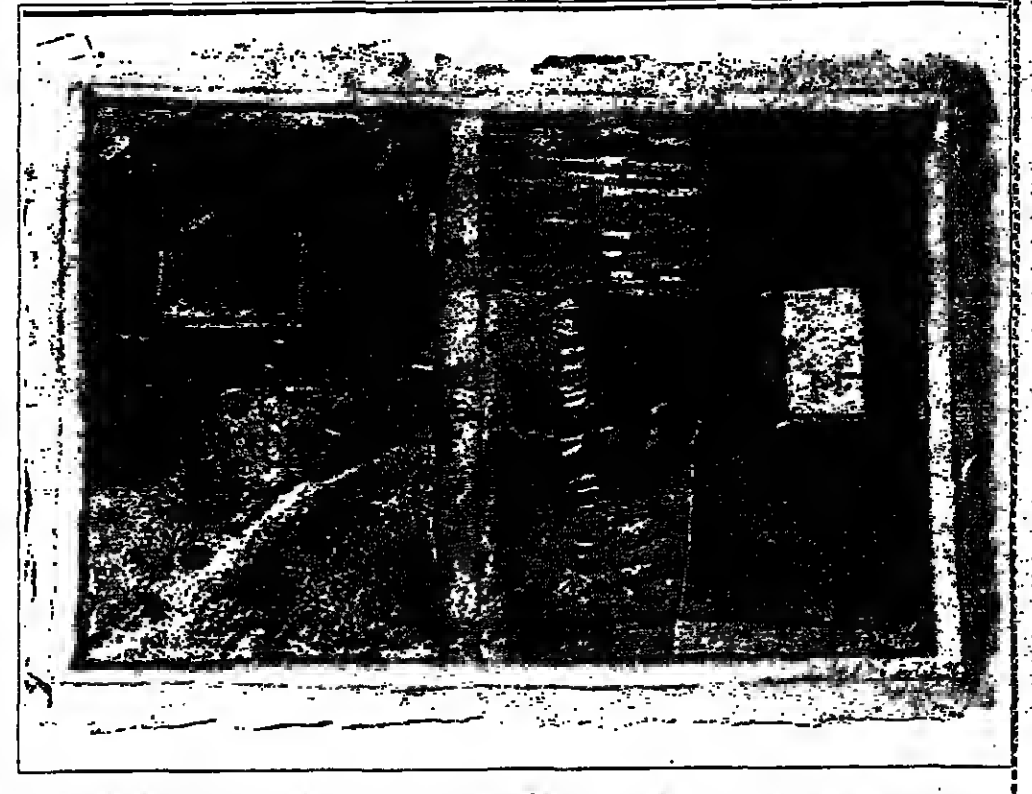
C'est à partir de ces maisons des camps que Ghada tire ses formes. Elle s'y est souvent trouvée en 1989 lorsqu'elle avait l'habitude d'aller rencontrer les femmes des camps. Elle a été fascinée par les fenêtres et les portes qui constituent aujourd'hui le thème de la troisième phase de production de ses œuvres.

Ce thème nous ramène à une déclaration du peintre espagnol Antoni Tàpies «le sens traditionnel de la porte renvoie à sa fonction d'ouverture sur un espace, sur une vie située au-delà». Tàpies insistait sur le caractère métaphysique de la porte en tant que division entre deux mondes, la porte devenant ainsi l'expression de la co-existence des opposés. Une dualité que l'on retrouve dans les œuvres de Ghada Dahdaleh.

Elle commence par construire ses toiles avec des portes, des fenêtres et des décors géométriques peints sur les murs de ces maisons. Elle utilise aussi le motif du linge pendu sur un fil qui passe devant une fenêtre, une scène assez commune dans les quartiers surpeuplés. Vu de loin, cela ressemble à une chaîne de petits carreaux qui passent devant un rectangle.

Ghada Dahdaleh commence par ces images, puis se détache lentement de leur représentation pour créer un monde abstrait qui lui appartient.

Elle utilise les fenêtres des maisons comme les pages d'un



livre. Pour les lier, elle répète les mêmes rythmes dans chaque rectangle. Si par leur composition ces toiles rappellent son travail précédent, les couleurs ont elles beaucoup évoluées. Elle utilise aujourd'hui des couleurs beaucoup plus vives que jadis, bien que les tons moyens qu'elle affectionnait auparavant, fassent toujours partie de sa palette.

Ghada choisit des couleurs analogues (tels que le violet, le bleu, vert, pourpre) faciles à harmoniser, ou, au contraire

des contrastes absolus comme un carreau bleu royal sur un fond ocre jaune. L'harmonie n'en souffre pas car c'est dans ses tonalités, l'intensité de ses couleurs, que l'artiste donne de l'équilibre à ses peintures. Ce sont des œuvres étudiées avec une esthétique passionnante.

Pour obtenir ces tons riches, Ghada superpose les couches de peinture. On trouve dans ses toiles des transparences voilées, des espaces illuminés et des surfaces solides qui créent une grande variété de tons.

Ghada Dahdaleh nous réserve parfois une surprise. Une couleur inattendue. Un vert pistache, qui commence à vibrer au cœur de la toile, ressortit au-delà du cadre en ocre rouge. Un jeu de couleurs étonnant, mobile dans un monde caractérisé par l'immobilisme et la rigidité.

Dans quelques toiles, et essentiellement les plus petites, les fenêtres sont délimitées par de fines lignes dessinées à l'encre qui se promènent dans le tableau ou bien par des traits épais et lourds faits au pastel, à l'aiguille ou au fusain, qui figent la composition. Une fois de plus, la diversité règne.

L'ensemble de ces petites toiles exposées ensemble dans la même partie de la salle du Centre culturel français crée un effet de mouvement grâce à cette guerre subtile entre les formes et les couleurs. Un ensemble dans lequel chaque petite toile se vante d'être unique et se singularise par sa composition. ■

Nelly Lamm

C'est la vie

L'agenda français d'Amman

Exposition

«Ghada Dahdaleh». Une jeune peintre jordanienne d'origine palestinienne, Ghada Dahdaleh, revient en Jordanie après un long séjour au Canada pour présenter son exposition «Portes et fenêtres». Jusqu'au 29 octobre au Centre Culturel français.

Vidéo

Cycle Alain Resnais: quatre films sont présentés au CCF dans le cadre de ce cycle au mois d'octobre. «Mon oncle d'Amérique», le 21 octobre à 20h00.

Musique

Le trio Thierry Robin sera en concert le 20 octobre à 20h à Darat al Funun.

Thierry Robin est un musicien attiré par les musiques d'improvisation, notamment celles des cultures traditionnelles occidentales et orientales.



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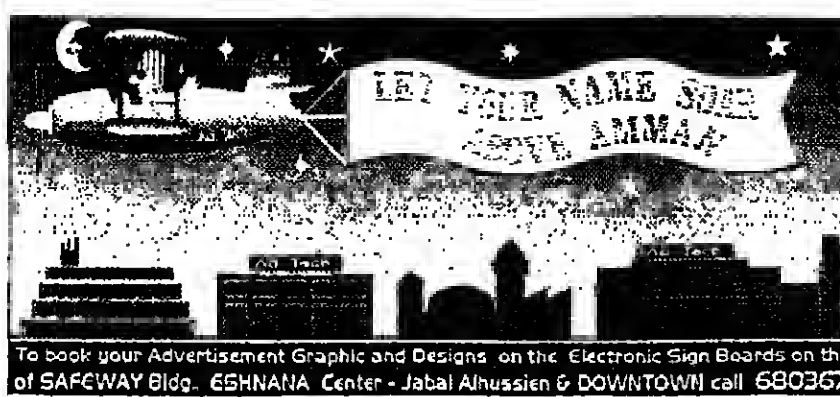
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THE STAR'S

COMPUTING & HIGH TECH

Edited by Zeid Nasser

C.N.S. all set to launch a new bulletin board service (BBS) into the Jordanian market: Primus BBS is here

THE ON-line services scene in Jordan has witnessed much activity over the past year and a half. This is due to the introduction of bulletin board services to the Jordanian public, namely NETS and Access, and the start of full Internet on-line service, offered by Global One / Sprint Jordan at the beginning of this year.

So much is the enthusiasm that there is much untapped potential, guaranteeing the responsiveness of the Jordanian public to more on-line services, especially if they offer something new or exciting.

It is from this standpoint that Computer Networking Services (C.N.S.) is launching its Primus (BBS) Bulletin Board Service, taking things one step further, by providing a service that stands out by providing a number of new attractions.

Primus provides an easily operated graphical interface, called Wildcat Navigator, which resembles the Internet's World Wide Web (WWW). This is a mixture of text and pictures. This strong graphical element is what sets Primus apart from others, at first glance. Naturally, there are more surprises behind the pretty graphics, including email services, conferences, file libraries and more.

"Primus offers something for everybody. Our service provides varied information and functionality that caters to different needs of different users," said Mr Nidal Nasereddin, general manager at C.N.S.

Primus, meaning the best among equals, aims to live up to its name through quality service. In fact, the company's logo is the Pegasus—a mythical horse—resembling the

strive for perfection. "We understand the importance of content in attracting users. Already, leading local companies and organizations have



C.N.S. managerial team (Clockwise): Omar Qawas, Amer Nasereddin, Nidal Nasereddin

chosen Primus as a promotional outlet for their activities," said Mr Amer Nasereddin, marketing manager at C.N.S. "We are publishing Web pages for these clients and it's only the beginning. The idea is that, once the service officially launches, users have content," added Mr Nasereddin.

C.N.S. are confident that their choice of software will make their service stand out. "Wildcat Navigator utilizes the ease-of-use and aesthetic look of HTML (Hypertext Markup Language), the World Wide Web standard programming language," commented Mr Omar Qawas, technical manager at C.N.S. "Users will feel familiar with our software," he added.

"Once the communications

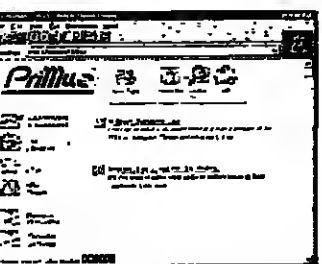
infrastructure in the country allows on-line services to provide ramps onto the Internet, our software is ready and able," said Mr Qawas.

The official launch for the Primus BBS is set for the Middle East Technology Show 1996, for which C.N.S. is a sponsor. At the show, the company plans to provide complete demonstrations of the service along with some surprises.

Subscription to Primus is offered on a monthly, quarterly or yearly basis. The cost per month is JD 10, but this drops according to the number of months subscribed. C.N.S. is promising optimum service, that starts upon subscription and continues with the timely response to customer needs.

"Our success will be dependant on customer satisfaction," added Mr Amer Nasereddin.

For now, Primus has well over a hundred users who have been offered a chance to check out the service earlier than others. Their reactions are very positive and Primus looks set to make a real impression on the on-line aware community in Jordan. "Log into Primus and



see the difference," concluded Mr Amer Nasereddin. For more information on Primus BBS, contact C.N.S. at telephone 614755.

Potential infringements of copyright law through web caching: Copyrights and copywrongs!

By Jawad Abbassi
Special to The Star

ALTHOUGH CACHING a web page, whether on the local PC level or at a proxy server level, may be advantageous in accelerating browsing speed, the lawyers seem to have a different opinion. The legally well versed do accept the technical advantages of caching, but will point out its potential infringement of copyright protection, of the cached web pages and their content. Jurists maintain that the novelty of the Internet and its continuously evolving technologies shouldn't make it beyond the reach of legislation that govern peoples' lives. At the same time they concede that the evolving "Cyber Law" is in continuous flux due to this novelty which means there are no old rules to which people can refer.

The Jordanian law #22 of 1992, concerned with Copyright protection, stipulates that any work benefiting from copyright protection must be registered (deposited) as such, and fine ranging from JD 20 to JD 100. So a word of advice is due here to all our local web developers: the small phrase of "Copyright Company name" and "all rights reserved" does entail a procedure to register the web page or its content as protected by copyright law while failure to do so is a legal offense. Furthermore, claims of copyright infringement are denied for any work that is not registered. This is similar to the

American law where non-registration of "copyrighted" material results in denying the right to statutory damages, should copyright infringement occur. However, while the lack of registration hinders claims to damage and loss, it doesn't negate the right to stop copyright infringement by the authorities and the liability of copyright offenders.

Copyright laws ban—among others—the reproduction, distribution, public display of registered material except in the context of fair use. Incidentally, local and proxy caching reproduce, distribute and publicly display web pages, which makes caching a potentially criminal business.

While fair use of work protected by copyrights remains legal—like reproducing the work for the sake of criticizing it or for use as a reference—the new concept of caching blurs the line between fair use and copyright infringement. For example, proxy servers cache web pages to help reduce connection times for users and infrastructural investments. As such, proxy servers are "reproducing" web pages that can be and/or contain materials protected by Copyright laws for materialistic and commercial benefits which makes the "fair use" argument dubious. Furthermore, fair use of material protected by copyrights, usually means that only a reasonable portion should be reproduced, but proxy caching almost always reproduces and

publicly displays a web page in its entirety. An intriguing notion that local caching (caching on the end user level) is a violation of copyright as it "reproduces" a web page in RAM or in the hard disk has been so far the principal established by consistent American courts rulings. In Jordan, such legal tidbits are yet to surface since Jordanian citizens are less technically inclined and maybe less in love with litigation than their American counterparts.

The fact that caching web pages is far from being established as "fair use" is underlined by the use of what is referred to as "dynamic pages" by many web developers. A dynamic web page is not displayed except to an end user that triggers a certain server resident program to view the page. This method disallows proxy servers from caching the web page since it only allows viewing by end users.

The complexities that the Internet present to many established laws and regulations stresses the effect of technical advances on reshaping our lives. For now, the lawyers and legislators must work hard to modify and update laws that are made fuzzy by changes in technology. With the Americans being the most Internet savvy people in the world and the most inclined towards litigation, it seems the new Cyber laws and regulations—just as Cyber space itself—will be distinctively American.

Email: abbassi@nets.com.jo

Silicon Graphics announces Origin & O2

SILICON GRAPHICS Computer Systems, in cooperation with Ideal Dimensions, held a press conference in Amman announcing the company's latest product ranges, the Silicon Graphics Origin and O2.

Mr Nasser Sunaa, business development manager for Silicon Graphics Middle East Operations, provided a comprehensive presentation that started out with a corporate look at Silicon Graphics and its strength of presence in the international market.

Silicon Graphics is a \$2.9 billion dollar company, which has completed its acquisition of the supercomputer giant, Cray Computers, providing the broadest product line possible in the high-performance computer market that puts the power of Cray at the service of Silicon Graphics users. The

result has been products that represent massive leaps in performance.

Contrary to certain misconceptions regarding Silicon Graphics, only 15% of the company's revenue comes from the entertainment industry, which engulfs animation, multimedia and related applications.

"40% of Silicon Graphics business comes from servers for networking and Internet. In the server business, Silicon Graphics is growing fast. It is third after Hewlett-Packard and IBM," said Mr Sunaa.

The Origin, mainly targeted at the servers market, comes into classes. First, there's the 200 which is a scalable, shared-memory, multiprocessing departmental server. At the higher-end, there's the Origin 2000 which represents a complete line of scalable enterprise

solutions, from one CPU all the way up to 128. The Origin series can seamlessly grow with your requirements, thanks to its S2MP architecture.

Then, there's the O2 desktop workstation, which aims to serve as the optimum Web-integrated user environment.

"The O2 is priced to be accessible to engineers and creative professionals. It represents excellent value and provides superior performance," added Mr Sunaa.

"You have applications now, due to the binary compatibility offered. You can use your same software with the Origin and O2 series". This is part of our commitment to protect your investment," said Mr Sunaa.

For more information on Silicon Graphics in Jordan, contact Ideal Dimensions at telephone number 6881 23.

Cantona: 'That was my worst match for United'

MANCHESTER—Eric Cantona had his worst ever match for Manchester United recently—but his team showed its true strength by beating Liverpool with barely a single contribution from the captain.

"I'd forgotten that I could play so badly," said the Frenchman after United's 1-0 victory at Old Trafford ended Liverpool's unbeaten start to the season and dislodged them from the top of the table.

"I am very unhappy. If people say I am playing badly it is true and I am very disappointed."

"I did not feel fit either physically or mentally. I did not feel right. Sometimes it happens in your job too. It's when you wake up and don't feel too good then you have a bad day."

Cantona's performances since becoming United's captain have generally been subdued and he was no more than a bit-part player throughout most of Saturday's hard-fought Lancashire derby, watched by 55,128—United's biggest crowd for 12 years.

None of his trademark flicks worked, his passing was inaccurate and his back heels went to the opposition. The King of Old Trafford looked very mortal indeed.

"It happens to footballers from time to time," he said to a

group of reporters on the Old Trafford pitch afterwards.

"It's happened to me on occasions since my first professional game when I was 17. But there are games on Wednesday and next Sunday when I have to play better. My next good performance must come very quickly and I can't wait for it to come."

United need Cantona's golden touch to return as soon as possible. On Wednesday they face Tottenham in the European Champions' league and next weekend face English league leaders Newcastle United.

Manager Alex Ferguson has criticized the fixture planning which has given his side such tough matches either side of a champions' league game, but although his team were largely outplayed by Liverpool, at least they took all three points.

Ferguson was also upset that his players did not follow his tactical instructions to try and counter Liverpool's game—but he was full of praise for David May and Norwegian Ronny Johnsen for the way they defended.

Ferguson praised May's performance, saying: "He made three tackles on the edge of our box which were absolutely superb. That's an art that's probably dying in the game because defenders are protected by midfielders and delaying (tactics)."

"But when someone can tackle like that it sends a message to the players in front not to worry if someone runs on to him, because he'll tackle them. People talk about the saves Schmeichel has made but those three tackles were better."

David Beckham scored United's winner with a shot that went in off the post after 23 minutes.



United's Eric Cantona hopes for a better performance

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David Beckham scored United's winner with a shot that went in off the post after 23 minutes.

Sent-off Italian kisses woman referee

PADUA, Italy—An Italian soccer player who was sent off by a female referee after picking up two bookings replied by kissing her on both cheeks.

Striker Alessandro Veronesi, 26, was first booked for a hand ball and then for taking off his shirt after scoring for Bastaglia in their 2-0 amateur league win over Rocca at the weekend, the ANSA news agency reported on Tuesday.

Veronesi first shook medical student Anna Di Toni by the hand and then kissed her twice.

Western Union sponsors UAE Desert Challenge

ABU DHABI—Western Union announced today its sponsorship of the UAE Desert Challenge '96, the final phase of the Federation Automobile International World Cup for Cross Country Rallyes. The four day-long car rally from Abu Dhabi to Dubai is the largest world-class rally event to be staged in the Middle East or Asia.

The UAE Desert Challenge has been dubbed one of the most challenging and adventurous rally raid events in the World Cup, routed over all types of desert terrain with almost 100% sand driving and no rough or rocky surfaces.

"Western Union is proud to sponsor the U.A.E. Desert Challenge, an event which attracts competitors from nearly every country served by the Western Union Money Transfer network," said Bernard Giboz, Regional Director—Africa, Western Union Financial Services International. "In fact, several rally participants took advantage of the speed, safety and reliability of Western Union Money Transfers to pay the UAE Desert Challenge registration fee."

Rally spectators and participants can obtain information about Western Union's Money Transfer locations and services hours in the United Arab Emirates, or anywhere else in Western Union's global network, by contacting UAE Exchange Center and the Al Ansari Exchange. Est. Users can reach

UAE Exchange Center at 800 28 28 and Al Ansari Exchange at 800 23 44. Both agents have locations throughout the seven states that comprise the United Arab Emirates.

Western Union Money Transfers to the United Arab Emirates are paid out in UAE dirhams or US dollars. English is spoken at both these numbers. Western Union Money Transfers help people support their families, aid students in foreign countries, rescue travelers in emergencies, and keep businesses operating smoothly.

To use the service, remitters bring the cash they want to send to any of Western Union's more than 30,000 locations worldwide. The local agent immediately enters the remittance information into Western Union's secure worldwide computer system.

Minutes later, that information is available to all other Western Union agents, who are authorized to instantly pay out the transfer amount to the proper recipient. Anyone can use the service, and no bank account or credit card is required.

The Western Union Money Transfer network is the largest of its kind in the world, currently serving 130 countries, including the United States, Russia, the Ukraine, and the countries of Eastern and Western Europe.

Western Union Financial Services International provides

rapid money transfer services throughout the world. Famous for its pioneer telegraph services, the original Western Union company dates back to 1851 and introduced the first money transfer service in 1871. In 1995 the company became part of First Data Corporation (NYSE:FDC), which is headquartered in the United States.

First Data Corporation (NYSE:FDC), which reported

more than \$4.1 billion in revenues in 1995, provides information processing services to financial institutions, merchants, insurance companies, health care providers, government agencies, public utilities and consumers throughout the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia and through its agent network to more than 120 countries around the world.

Patriotism and nostalgia combine in Hill's win



LONDON—Patriotism and nostalgia combined perfectly at the weekend for the British sporting public when Damon Hill emulated his father Graham by capturing the Formula One world drivers' title.

The Times devoted its second leader on Monday to Hill's triumph in Suzuka, Japan, under the headline "A good win for a good man."

"Damon Hill has never regarded victory as the be-all and end-all," The Times said.

"At 36 he is old enough to understand failure: to see beyond ephemeral glory and to realize that fair play, balance and dignity are at least as important as the often obsessive compulsion to beat all others. Such qualities are held up as the quintessence of English sportsmanship, but too often they seem to belong to an earlier, more innocent age."

The Times outlined the comparison between Hill and his late father, who won the championship in 1962 and again in 1968. "Hill now shares with his father the honour of being one of the world's great drivers," it said.

"He brings to a new generation his father's glory, enhanced by his own gallantry and grace."

Stirling Moss, the most respected British driver of the 1950s although he never won a world title, said he considered Damon Hill to be a better driver than his father.

"Graham was a brilliant after-dinner speaker and terrific on camera," Moss wrote in the Daily Telegraph. "When he was able to be himself, he was really very funny."

Al Daoud wins Palace Lights National Rally

AMMAN (Star)—The first position of the National Palace Lights Rally was seized by the driver Muhammad Al Daoud who was caught in a challenging and thrilling race with other competent Jordanian drivers last Friday. The race was patronized by HRH Prince Faisal who gave the starting signal at the headquarters of the Royal Automobile Club of Jordan (RACJ).

The race towards the Dead Sea witnessed a real competition. The expectations that Basshar Al Bustami, whom the Palace Lights Company had sponsored, will win were turned upside down. Al Bustami failed to continue the race as his car turned over in the Kafra stage. Only eight drivers out of 10 arrived at the Palace Lights premises where the race was supposed to end.

A Prize-giving ceremony was held last Saturday at the RACJ. The ceremony was attended by Prince Faisal, officials from the automobile club and the Palace Lights Company.

The final results of the race went as follows:
■ Muhammad Al Daoud, first, Ford 1:26:17
■ Marouf Abu Samra, Ford 1:26:30
■ Ahmed Al Daoud, Ford 1:29:11
■ Fares Bustami, Toyota, 1: 29:46

